

The Spiritual Cure

An Explanation to Sūrah al-Fātiḥah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
رَبِّ الْجِنِّينَ مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ
إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّنَا
أَنْتَ أَنْتَ الْمُصْرِطُ عَلَىٰ هُدًىٰ
وَرَبُّ الْجِنِّينَ أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِ عَزَّ ذِيٰ
الْحُكْمِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا أَنْتَ بِهِمْ
شَارِعٌ

A summary of numerous classical
commentaries of the Qur'ān

al-Tabārī, al-Baghawī, az-Zamakhsharī, ibn 'Atīyyah, ibn al-Jawzī,
al-Qurṭubī, ibn al-Qayyim, ibn Kathīr, as-Suyūṭī, al-Ālūsī,
ash-Shawkānī, as-Sā'dī, ash-Shanqītī and many others



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ الرَّحْمَنِ
الرَّحِيمِ ۝ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝
إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ۝
اَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرَ
الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ۝

Abū Sa'īd after he had recited it to cure a person,
the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) asked him,

*“...and what made you know
it was a ruqyā, Spiritual
Cure?...”*

BUKHĀRĪ #264 #476

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ibn al-Jawzī, ar-Rāzī, al-Qurtubī, ibn al-Qayyim, ibn Kathīr, as-
Suyūtī, al-Ālūsī, ash-Shawkānī, as-Sa'dī, ash-Shanqītī
and many others

Prepared and translated by Abū Rumaysah



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Transliteration Table

Consonants. Arabic

initial: unexpressed medial and final:

ءِ	d	ضِ	k
بِ	ذ dh	طِ	لِ
تِ	رِ	ظِ	مِ
ثِ	زِ	عِ	نِ
جِ	سِ s	غِ gh	هِ h
حِ	شِ sh	فِ f	وِ w
خِ	صِ s	قِ q	يِ y

Vowels, diphthongs, etc.

Short: - a - i - u

long: لـ a ئـ وـ ئـ ئـ ئـ ئـ

50 ay

Sūrah al-Fātiḥah (1) : 1-7

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝

1. With the Name of Allāh,
The All-Merciful, The Most Merciful

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

2. All Praises and thanks are due to Allāh

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝

3. The All-Merciful (*ar-Rahmān*),
The Most Merciful (*ar-Rahīm*)

مَالِكُ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝

4. Master of the Day of Judgement

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِيْنُ ①

5. You Alone we worship, You Alone we ask for help

اَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ②
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ اَنْهَىَ مَلَكِيْمَ

6. Guide us to the Straight Path,
The Path of those whom You have favoured

غَيْرَ
الْمَغْضُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالُّلُ ③

7. Not [the path] of those who have earned [Your] anger,
nor those who have gone astray

INTRODUCTION

*With the Name of Allāh,
the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful*

Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is the greatest chapter of the Qur’ān, its like is not found in the rest of the Book or in the previous scriptures. It is a light that was granted to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) which had not been granted to any other Prophet or Messenger before him; indeed some of the Salaf stated that when this chapter was revealed, Shayṭān let out a great cry of lament. It holds a central position in the daily prayer and hence the daily life of the Muslim.

The underlying theme of *al-Fātiḥah* is one of contemplation and serenity; pondering the Names and Attributes of Allāh, pondering the creation, and acknowledging that He Alone deserves praise and worship, that He Alone should be asked for help, that He Alone should be feared and hoped in, that He Alone should be invoked, that there is indeed a Day of Judgment, and that guidance has come to us and we are required to follow it. It calls us to carefully scrutinise our relationship with our Lord: are we living according to the dictates of ‘none has the right to be worshipped save of Allāh’ or not?¹ This opening chapter, despite its brevity, calls man to fulfil

¹ al-Baqā’ī, vol.1, pg.12; al-Faīrūzabādī, vol.1, pg.12

the rights of *Tawhid*, the right that Allāh has over us to worship Him Alone without any partners, in thirty places.²

This chapter summarises succinctly the message of the whole Qur'ān.

Owing to the importance of this chapter, this commentary has been collated. It is a summary of numerous classical commentaries of the Qur'ān, these being

1. at-Tabārī (d. 310H), Abū Ja'far Muḥammad bin Jarīr, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wil al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1412/1992, 12 volumes
2. as-Sama'ānī (d. 489H), Abū al-Muẓaffar Maṇṣūr bin Muḥammad, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Wa'yān, Riyād, 1st ed., 1418/1997, 6 volumes
3. al-Baghawī (d. 516H), Abū Muḥammad al-Husayn bin Maṣ'ūd, *Ma'ālim at-Tanzīl*, Dār at-Taybah, Riyad, 2nd ed., 1414/1993, 8 volumes
4. az-Zamakhsharī (d. 538), Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd bin 'Umar, *al-Kashshāf 'an Haqā'iq at-Tanzīl wa 'Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh at-Ta'wil*, Dār Ihyā' at-Turāth al-'Arabī, Beirut, 1st ed., 1417/1197, with the notes of ibn al-Munayyir (d. 683H), 4 volumes
5. ibn 'Atīyyah (d. 546), Abū Muḥammad 'Abdu-l-Ḥaqq bin Ghālib, *al-Muharrar al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-'Azīz*, Maktabah Bāz, Mecca, 1st ed., 1422/2001, 6 vols.
6. ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597), Abū al-Farāj Jamālu-d-Dīn 'Abdur-Rahmān, *Zād al-Masīr fī I'lām at-Tafsīr*, al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 4th ed., 1407/1987, 9 volumes
7. ar-Rāzī (d. 606H), Muḥammad bin 'Umar bin al-Husayn, *at-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, Dār Ihyā' at-Turāth al-'Arabī, Beirut, 1st ed., 1415/1997, 11 volumes

² Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, *al-Dīn al-Khalīq*, vol. 1, pg. 7 who proceeds to list them.

8. al-Qurtubī (d. 671H), Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad bin Aḥmad, *al-Jāmi’ li-l-Abkām al-Qur’ān*, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 5th ed., 1417/1996, 20+1 volumes
9. Abū Ḥayyān (d. 745H), Muḥammad bin Yūsuf, *al-Bahr al-Muḥit*, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1413/1993, 8 volumes
10. ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751H), Shamsu-d-Dīn Muḥammad bin Abū Bakr, *Tafsīr al-Qayyim*, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, collated by M. an-Nadwī, 1 volume
11. ibn Kathīr (d. 774H), ‘Imādu-d-Dīn Abū al-Fiṭā’ Ismā’il, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, Jam’iyyah Iḥyā at-Turāth al-Islāmī, Kuwait, 1st ed., 1414/1994, 4 volumes
12. al-Bayḍāwī (d. 791), Nāṣir ad-Dīn Abū Sa’īd ‘Abdullāh Abū ‘Umar bin Muḥammad, *al-Anwār at-Tanzīl wa-l-Aṣrār at-Ta’wīl*, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1st ed., 1416/1996, with the explanation of al-Kāzrūnī, 5 volumes
13. ibn ‘Ādil (d. 880H), Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar bin ‘Alī, *al-Lubāb fi ‘Ulūm al-Kitāb*, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1419/1998, 20 volumes
14. al-Baqā’ī (d. 885H), Burhān ad-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Ibrāhīm bin ‘Umar, *Nazm ad-Durar fi Tanāsib al-Āyāt wa-s-Sūwar*, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1415/1995, 8 volumes
15. as-Suyūṭī (d. 911H), Jalālu-d-Dīn ‘Abdur-Rahmān bin Abū Bakr, *ad-Durr al-Manthūr fi-t-Tafsīr al-Ma’thūr*, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1421/2000, 6+1 volumes
16. al-Khāzin (d. 725), ‘Alā’u-d-Dīn ‘Alī bin Muḥammad, *Lubāb at-Ta’wīl fi Ma’āni at-Tanzīl*, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, in the margin of which is an-Nasafī, *Madārik at-Tanzīl wa Haqdīq at-Ta’wīl*, 4 volumes
17. al-Ālūsī (d. 1270H), Abū al-Faḍl Shihāb ad-Dīn Maḥmūd, *Rūb al-Ma’āni fi Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aqīm wa-s-Sab’ al-Mathānī*, Dār Iḥyā at-Turāth al-Arabi, 1st ed., 1420/1999, 29 volumes
18. ash-Shawkanī (d. 1250H), Muḥammad ‘Alī bin Muḥammad, *Fath*

- al-Qadīr al-Jāmī' bayna fannay ar-Riwayā wa-d-Dirāyah min 'Ilm at-Tafsīr,
'Ālam al-Kutub, 4 volumes
19. Rīdā (d. 1865H), Muhammād Rāshīd, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1420/1999, 12 volumes
20. as-Sādī, *Taysīr al-Karīm ar-Rahmān*, Mu'assasatūr-Risālah, 1 volume.
21. ash-Shanqītī (d. 1393), Muhammād al-Amīn, *Adwā' al-Bayān fi idāh al-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1417/1996, 10 volumes
22. Sālim, 'Aṭīyyah Muhammād, *Āyātu-l-Hidāyah wa-l-Istiqa'mah fi Kitābillāh*, Dār at-Turāth, Mādinah, 1st ed., 1414/1993, 2 volumes

Moreover a number of works dealing with *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* were also referred to:

1. al-Kirmānī (d. 500H), Maḥmūd bin Ḥamzah bin Naṣr, *al-Burhān fi Mutashābih al-Qur'ān*, Dār as-Ṣādir, Beirut, 2nd ed., 1417/1996, 1 volume
2. al-Asbahānī (d. 502H), Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn bin Muhammād, *al-Mufradāt fi Gharib al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1418/1998, 1 volume
3. az-Zarkashī (d. 794H), Badr ad-Dīn Muhammād bin 'Abdullāh, *al-Burhān fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Dār at-Turāth, Cairo, 4 volumes
4. al-Fayrozabādī (d. 817H), Muhammād bin Ya'qūb, *Baṣā'ir Dhawī at-Tamyīz*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 6 volumes
5. as-Suyūtī, *al-Itqān fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 3rd ed., 1415/1995, 2 volumes
6. as-Suyūtī, *Mu'tarik al-Aqrān fi Ijāz al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1408/1988, 3 volumes
7. as-Suyūtī, *Aṣrār Tartīb al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Faṣīlah, Cairo, 1 volume

Exegesis of a fathomless ocean such as the Book of Allāh can never be complete and it is a study that one undertakes throughout

the course of his life. This commentary is but a tiny portion of the material available in exegesis to this chapter, much has been omitted, much has been summarised, but it should go some way in giving the reader a glimpse at the depth of meaning found therein and at the extent of the efforts of our scholars, may Allāh have mercy upon them all, in undertaking the momentous task of explaining the Qur'ān.

I ask Allāh that He count this effort amongst the scales of my good works and forgive me for any errors contained therein.

Abū Rumaysah

CHAPTER I

al-Fātiḥah

1.1 Its Name

This chapter has a great many names, each one indicating a different aspect of its meaning. In the eyes of the Arabs if a thing had many different names, this was an indication of its importance.¹

It is named *al-Fātiḥah*, the Opening - because it opens the Book and by it the recitation in prayer commences.

It is also named *Ummu-l-Qur'ān*, the Mother of the Qur'ān, and *Ummu-l-Kitāb*, the Mother of the Book, according to the opinion of the majority. This was mentioned by Anas, however al-Hasan and ibn Sirīn disliked this appellation reasoning that this was the most fitting description for the Preserved Tablet. al-Hasan also said that the unequivocal verses of the Qur'ān comprised the Mother of the Book. However, it is established in at-Tirmidhī on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

[The chapter commencing with] "*All praise and thanks are due to Allāh the Lord of the worlds*" is the Mother

¹ as-Suyūtī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 1, pg. 116; al-Khāzin vol. 1, pg. 11

of the Qur'ān, the Mother of the Book, the Seven Oft-Repeated Verses and the Great Qur'ān.²

Bukhārī said in the beginning of the Book of *Tafsīr* in his *Sabīb*,

It is named *Ummu-l-Qur'ān* because it is the first chapter written in the Qur'ānic texts and the recitation in prayer commences with it.³

Ibn Jarīr at-Tabarī said that it was named so because the meaning of the entire Qur'ān is summarised therein. The Arabs named anything that concisely summarises something or comprises its most important part, *Umm*, or mother.

For similar reasons it is also named *al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, the Great Qur'ān.

It is also named *Sab'u-l-Mathānī*, the Seven Oft-Repeated Verses, because they are frequently recited and indeed recited in every *rak'ah* of the prayer.

It is also named *al-Hamd*, the Praise, because it contains mention of *hamd* just as *al-Baqarah* is named so because it contains mention of the cow. Some scholars also gave the reasoning that *al-Hamd* comprises heart of *al-Fatiḥah*.⁴

²i.e. *Ummu-l-Qur'ān*, *Ummu-l-Kitāb*, *Sab'u-l-Mathānī* and *al-Qur'ānu-l-'Aẓīm*.

at-Tirmidhī #3124, Abū Dāwūd #1457, and Ahmād #9788, 9790. at-Tirmidhī said it was ḥasan ṣahīḥ, it was ruled ḥasan by as-Suyūṭī, *al-Jāmi'* as-Saghīr #3833, and ṣahīḥ by al-Albānī, *Sabūb al-Jāmi'* #3184. Bukhārī #4704 also records it without the words, "the Mother of the Book".

Similar ahādīth are also recorded on the authority of Abū Sa'īd ibn al-Mu'allā by Bukhārī #4703 and Ubayy ibn Ka'b by Ahmād #21094, 21095

³ Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 6, pg. 1, chpt. 1

⁴ as-Sindi, *Sharḥ as-Sindi 'alā ibn Mājāb* #3790

It is also named *as-Salāb*, the Prayer, due to his (ﷺ) saying while reporting from his Lord,

I have divided the prayer between Myself and my servant equally. Therefore when the servant says, "*All praise and thanks are due to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds*" Allāh says, 'My servant has praised Me...'⁵

It is named the Prayer because its recitation is a condition for the validity of the prayer.⁶

It is also named *asb-Shifā'*, the Cure, due to what ad-Dārimī reports on the authority of Abū Sa'īd that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

'The Opening of the Book is a cure for every poison.'⁷

It is also named *ar-Ruqyā*, the Spiritual Cure, due to the ḥadīth of Abū Sa'īd recorded by Bukhārī that after he had recited it to cure a person who had been bitten by a scorpion, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) asked him,

⁴ The referencing for this ḥadīth shall follow in the section concerning the virtues of *al-Fātiḥah* *inshāAllāh*.

⁶ In the eyes of the majority of scholars, as will be explained shortly *inshāAllāh*.

⁷ Sa'īd ibn Mansūr and al-Bayhaqī, *asb-Shu'ab al-Imān* #2368. ad-Daylāmī and Abū ash-Shaykh also record it on the authority of Abū Hurayrah as per al-'Ijlūnī, *Kashf al-Khafā'* #1816. It was ruled *da'iif* by as-Suyūṭī #5826, and *mawdū'* by al-Albānī #3950.

Bayhaqī #2366 also records on the authority of Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "It contains a cure from every illness." ad-Dārimī #3413, and al-Bayhaqī #2370, also record this wording on the authority of 'Abdu-l-Malik ibn 'Umayr with a mursal isnād as stated by al-Bayhaqī; this was ruled *da'iif* by as-Suyūṭī #5827 and al-Albānī #3951.

...and what made you know it was a *nugya*?⁸

ash-Sha'bī records on the authority of ibn 'Abbās that he named it *Asāṣū-l-Qur'ān*, the Foundation of the Qur'ān, and that he said, 'the foundation of *al-Fātīhah* is, "*with the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful.*" This is because just as *al-Fātīhah* summarises within it the meaning of the whole Qur'ān, the whole meaning of *al-Fātīhah* is summarised by this statement⁹ as will be shown later.

Sufyān bin 'Uyaynah named it *al-Wāfiyah*, the Fulfillment, reasoning that it is not possible to apportion it into various parts when reciting, or to summarise it.

Yahyā bin Abū Kathīr named it *al-Kāfiyah*, the Sufficient, because it suffices from everything other than it but anything else does not suffice it. The mursal ḥadīth states,

The Mother of the Book suffices for other than it but nothing else suffices it.^{10,11}

⁸ Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 3, pg. 264 #476

⁹ al-Ālūsī, vol. 1 pg. 88

¹⁰ ad-Dāruqūnī, vol. 1, pg. 322, and al-Hākim #867 on the authority of 'Ubādah ibn as-Ṣāmit. It was declared ḏa'if by ibn al-Qattān as per al-Munāwi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, vol. 1, pg. 231; and al-Albānī #1274.

Its isnād contains Muhammad ibn Khallād about whom adh-Dhahabī, *al-Miṣān* said, 'It is not known who he is.... He was alone in reporting the ḥadīth of 'Ubādah ibn as-Ṣāmit from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), "The Mother of the Book suffices for other than it but nothing else suffices it." ... ad-Dāruqūnī said: it was singularly reported from ibn Khallād, however the preserved ḥadīth from az-Zuhri with this isnād is, "A prayer is not valid in which the Mother of the Book is not recited."

¹¹ ibn 'Aqīyyah, vol. 1, pg. 65; Qurtubī, vol. 1, pp. 79-81; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pp. 26-27; az-Zarkashī, vol. 1, pp. 169-270; as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pp. 20-22

It is also named *al-Kanz*, the Treasure; *ash-Shukr*, Gratitude; *ad-Du'ā*, Supplication; *ash-Shafiyah*, the Sufficient Cure; and *al-Wāqīyah*, the Protection as mentioned by al-Baqā'i.¹²

1.2 Its Revelation

It was revealed in Mecca as stated by ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Abū al-'Āliyah.

It is also postulated that it was revealed in Madīnah as stated by Abū Hurayrah, Mujāhid, 'Atā' bin Yasār and az-Zuhri. It is also said that it was revealed on two separate occasions - once in Mecca and once in Madīnah. However the first opinion is the most likely due to His saying,

وَلَقَدْ أَنْذَكَ سَبْعًا مِنَ الْمَنَافِ وَالْفُرْزَ إِنَّ الْعَظِيمَ

«We have sent to you the Seven Oft Repeated
Verses...»

[*al-Hijr* (15): 87]

This verse was revealed in Mecca by agreement of the exegetes.

Abū al-Layth as-Samarqandī relates that half of it was revealed in Mecca and the remaining half in Madīnah as quoted from him by al-Qurṭubī but this is an extremely strange position.

It is said that this chapter was the first thing revealed of the Qur'ān as mentioned in the ḥadīth reported by al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwa*. al-Bāqillānī quoted this as one of three opinions. It is also said that the first revelation comprised the verses of *Sūrah al-*

¹² See also al-Fairozabādī, vol. 1, pp. 128-129 who lists about thirty names for this Sūrah

Muddaththir but the correct opinion is that the first revelation consisted of the beginning verses of *Sūrah al-'Alaq*.¹³

1.3 Its Composition

It consists of seven verses and there is no difference concerning this.¹⁴ 'Amr bin 'Ubaid said that it consists of eight verses and Husayn al-Ju'afī said that it consists of six verses but both of these opinions are irregular and rejected.

They have differed concerning the statement "*with the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful*." The majority of the reciters of Kūfa postulate that it comprises an independent verse of *al-Fātiḥah* and this is also the opinion of a group of the Ṣahābah, Tābi'īn and a large group of the later scholars. However the reciters and jurists of Madinah regard it to be part of a verse, and not an independent verse, or not a verse at all.

Those who postulate that it is not a verse of *al-Fātiḥah* state that the seventh verse commences with the words, "*not [the path] of those who have earned [Your] anger...*"¹⁵

al-Fātiḥah consists of twenty-five words and one hundred and thirteen letters.¹⁶

¹³ ibn 'Aqīyah, vol. 1, pg. 65; ibn Kathir vol. 1, pg. 26

¹⁴ al-Baghawī, vol. 1, pg. 51; al-Faīrozabādī, vol. 1, pg. 128

¹⁵ ath-Tha'labī records this view from Abū Hurayrah as per as-Suyū̄ī, vol. 1, pg. 42

¹⁶ al-Baghawī, vol. 1, pg. 51; al-Qurtubī, vol. 1, pg. 81; ibn Kathir, vol. 1, pg. 26; al-Faīrozabādī, vol. 1, pg. 128

1.4 The Virtues of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah

There are a number of ahādīth explaining to us the great virtue of this *sūrah*.

1. Muslim records on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) who said that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

Allāh, the Glorious and Exalted said, “I have divided the prayer between Myself and My servant equally and My servant shall be granted what he asked for.” Therefore when the servant says, ‘All praises and thanks are due to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds’, Allāh says, ‘My servant has praised Me.’ When he says, ‘The All-Merciful, the Most Merciful,’ Allāh says, ‘My servant has extolled Me.’ When he says, ‘Master of the Day of Judgement,’ Allāh says, ‘My servant has glorified Me.’ When he says, ‘You Alone we worship and Your aid Alone do we seek,’ Allāh says, ‘This is between Me and My servant and My servant shall have what he requested.’ When he says, ‘Guide us to the Straight Path, the Path of those whom You have favoured, not [the path] of those who have earned [Your] anger, nor of those who have gone astray,’ Allāh says, ‘This is for My servant and My servant shall have what he asked for.’¹⁷

2. at-Tirmidhī records on the authority of Abū Hurayrah who said that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

[The chapter commencing with], “*All praise and thanks are due to Allāh the Lord of the worlds*” is the Mother of the Qur’ān, the Mother of the Book, the Seven Oft

¹⁷ Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 215 #775

Repeated Verses and the Great Qur'ān.¹⁸

3. Ahmad records on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*radiy Allāhu 'anhu*) who said,

The Prophet (ﷺ) called Ubayy bin Ka'b while he was praying in the Mosque saying, "O Ubayy!" Ubayy turned his head towards him but did not reply. The Prophet (ﷺ) called him again saying, "O Ubayy!" So Ubayy shortened his prayer and turned towards the Prophet and said, "*as-salāmu 'alaikum* O Messenger of Allāh." The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "*wa 'alaikum as-salām*. What prevented you from replying to me when I called you?" Ubayy said, "O Messenger of Allāh I was praying!" He said, "Does Allāh not say,

أَسْتَجِيبُ لِلّهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحِبُّ كُمْ

«...Respond to Allāh and the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life»

[*al-Anfāl* (8): 24]

Ubayy replied, "Yes O Messenger of Allāh! I will not do so again." The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) asked, "Would you like me to teach you a *Sūrah* the likes of which is not to be found in the Torah, Injīl, Zabūr, or the [rest of the] Qur'ān?" He said, "Yes O Messenger of Allāh." The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "I hope that I will not leave this door until you know it."

Ubayy said, "Then he took hold of my hand and talked to me while I slowed down fearing that we may reach the door before he finished talking. When we did reach it I asked him, 'What is the *Sūrah* you promised me, O Messenger of Allāh?' He said, 'What is the *Sūrah* you

¹⁸ The notes to this ḥadīth have preceded in fn. 2

recite in prayer?" So I recited the Mother of the Qur'ān upon which he said, 'By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, Allāh has not revealed the likes of it in the Torah, Injil, Zabūr, or the [rest of the] Qur'ān. It is the Seven Oft-Repeated verses.'¹⁹

4. Ahmad records on the authority of Abū Sa'd ibn al-Mu'allā who said,

The Prophet (ﷺ) called me while I was praying in the *Masjid* but I did not respond until I had completed the prayer. I went to him and he asked, "What prevented you from coming to me [earlier]?" I replied, "I was praying O Messenger of Allāh." He said, "Does Allāh not say,

أَتَسْتَجِيبُ لِوَاللَّهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّهُ

«...Respond to Allāh and the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life»

[al-Anfāl (8): 24]

He then said, "I will teach a *Sūrah* which is the greatest *Sūrah* in the Qur'ān before you leave the *Masjid*." Then he took hold of my hand and when he intended to leave [the *Masjid*], I asked him, "Did you not say that you would teach me a *Sūrah* which is the greatest *Sūrah* in the Qur'ān?" He replied, "yes. It is [the *Sūrah* commencing with], "*All praise and thanks are due to Allāh*." It is the Seven Oft-Repeated verses and the Great Qur'ān that has been given to me."²⁰

¹⁹ Ahmad #8682, 9345, 9788, 21094, 21095. It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Hibbān #775, ibn Khuzaymāh #500, 501, and al-Albānī #5560

²⁰ Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 6, pg. 1 #1; Ahmad #15730, and the wording is his.

5. Muslim records on the authority of ibn ‘Abbās (*radiy Allāhu ‘anhu*) who said,

While the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was sitting with Jibrīl he heard a creaking sound above him. Jibrīl looked up and said, “This is [the sound of] a gate that has been opened in Paradise today and has never been previously opened.” Then an Angel descended through it and came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, “Rejoice in the good news of two lights that have been given to you such as no Prophet before you has been given. [They are] *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* and the concluding [two] verses of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*. You will never recite a word from them without being given the blessings they contain.”²¹

This ḥadīth has led some scholars to suggest that Jibrīl did not convey the revelation of *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* and the last two verses of *al-Baqarah*, rather it was the Angel mentioned in this ḥadīth. However the correct opinion is that Jibrīl did indeed convey the revelation of these verses as he was enjoined by Allāh to convey the entire Qur’ān to the Prophet (ﷺ). The Angel that descended as mentioned in this ḥadīth, descended only to convey the reward of these verses.²²

6. an-Nasā’i records on the authority of Anas that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

“Should I not inform you of the most noble and excellent part of the Qur’ān?” He then recited *“All praise and thanks are due to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds”*²³

²¹ Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 2, pg. 586 #1759

²² al-Qurtubī, vol. 1, pp. 82-83

²³ an-Nasā’i, *al-Kubrā* #8011. It was declared ṣahīḥ by Ibn Ḥibbān #774, and al-Hākim #2056, with adh-Dhababī remaining silent.

Mujāhid said, 'When this chapter was revealed it bore down heavily upon Iblīs and he let out a loud wail in lament; whoever does this is worthy of being cursed.'²⁴

1.5 The Ruling of Reciting *al-Fatihah* in Prayer.

The opinion of the majority of the scholars, amongst them Mālik, ash-Shāfi'i and Aḥmad, is that it is obligatory to recite *al-Fatihah* in the prayer and that the prayer is invalid without it. Their opinion is based upon many proofs; from amongst them, the sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ).

There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book.²⁵

Whosoever performs a prayer in which he does not recite the Mother of the Book then it is deficient, it is deficient, it is deficient, it is incomplete.²⁶

The prayer is not valid in which the Mother of the Qur'ān is not recited.²⁷

However, according to Abū Ḥanīfah, those of his companions who agreed with him, al-Awzā'i and ath-Thawrī, it is not obligatory to recite *al-Fatihah*, rather any portion of the Qur'ān would be sufficient. They based this upon the saying of Allāh,

²⁴ as-Suyūtī, vol. 1, pg. 24

²⁵ Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 404 #723; Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 214 #771

²⁶ Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 215 #775

²⁷ Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 215 #772

فَاقْرُءُوا مَا يُسْهِلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ

«Recite what is easy [for you] of the Qur'ān»

[*al-Muzzammil* (73): 20]

and the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) to the man who prayed badly,

When you stand to pray, say the *takbir* and then recite what is easy for you of the Qur'ān.²⁸

Moreover, according to ash-Shāfi'i and a group of the People of Knowledge, it is obligatory to recite *al-Fatihah* in every *rak'ah* of the prayer. However, another group were of the opinion that it is sufficient to recite it in the majority of the *rak'ahs* and yet another group, from amongst them al-Hasan and the majority of the scholars of Baṣrah, were of the opinion that it is sufficient just to recite it in one *rak'ah*. This latter group took to the literal sense of the ḥadīth,

There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book

In the case where one is a follower in a congregational prayer, the scholars fell into three opinions with regards to his reciting *al-Fatihah*:

1. It is obligatory upon him to recite it in all prayers.
2. It is upon him not to recite it in all prayers.
3. He should recite it in those prayers in which the recitation is silent, but not in those prayers in which the recitation is loud.

The point here is not to discuss which is the strongest opinion

²⁸ Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 404 #724

but to show that *al-Fātīhab* has specific rulings to it that are not shared by any other chapter of the Qur'ān. Allāh Knows best.²⁹

²⁹ ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pp. 30-31

CHAPTER II

The Ruling of *Isti'ādhah* (Seeking Refuge)

2.1 The Enmity of *Shaytān*

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

خُذِ الْمَفْوَذَةَ
بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجُنُاحِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَإِمَّا يَزَغَّكَ مِنْ
الشَّيْطَانِ فَتَرْكُهُ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَيِّعُ عَلَيْهِ ﴿٢٠﴾

«Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good and turn away from the foolish. And if an evil suggestion comes to you from *Shaytān*, seek refuge with Allāh. Indeed He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing»

[*al-A'rāf* (7): 199-200]

أَدْفِعْ بِالْقَيْرَبِ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ الْسَّيْئَةَ تَذَنْ أَقْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِيفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾
وَقُلْ رَبِّيْ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَرَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ
رَبِّيْ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ ﴿٢١﴾

«Repel evil by means of what is best. We are best Acquainted with the things that they utter. And say, ‘My Lord! I take refuge with you from the whisperings of the devils and I take refuge with You my Lord lest they come near me.’»

[*al-Mu'minūn* (23): 96-98]

وَلَا سَتُوْلُ الْحَسَنَةِ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةِ
 ادْفَعْ بِالْأَقْرَبِ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي يَهْنَكَ وَيَنْهَا مَدْعُوهٌ كَانَهُ
 وَلِئِنْ خَيِّبَهُ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَمَا يَلْقَنَهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يَلْقَنَهَا
 إِلَّا ذُرْحَظَ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَلَمَّا يَرَزَّعَنَكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَنِ مُنْزَعٌ
 فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٢٥﴾

«...Repel [evil] with that which is better then indeed the one, between whom and you there was enmity, [will become] as though he was a devoted friend. But none is granted [this quality] except those who are patient and none is granted it save one who possesses a great portion [of high moral character]. And if an evil suggestion comes to you from *Shayjān*, seek refuge with Allāh, indeed He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing»

[*Fussilāt* (41): 34-46]

These verses command the servant of Allāh to seek refuge with Him from the accursed *Shayjān* due to the sevete enmity he displays towards mankind and displayed towards their father, Ādam (*alayhi salām*). Allāh says,

يَنْبِيُّ مَادِمٌ لَا يَفْتَنُنَّكُمْ
 الشَّيْطَنُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبْوَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ

«O Children of Ādam! Let not *Shayjān* deceive you,

as he removed your parents out of Paradise»

[*al-A'rāf* (7): 27]

Ibn al-Jawzī said,

Servants of Allāh! Ponder the removal of your father, Ādām, from Paradise, the abode of security, and his descent to the abode of disgrace and abasement. The reason for this was none other than the accursed *Shayṭān*. Your Master has prohibited you from obeying him and ordered you to disobey him. Indeed in his obedience lies the displeasure of *ar-Rahmān* and disobeying him necessitates residing in Paradise and the descent of divine pleasure. Allāh, Glorified and Exalted said,

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ

«*Shayṭān* threatens you with poverty and orders you to immorality»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 268]

So whoever obeys him, he forsakes him, diverts him from true guidance and opens the doors to misguidance and ignominy in his heart.¹

Allāh further explains to us the extreme enmity of *Shayṭān* with His words,

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُلُّ عَذَابٍ فَاتَّجِهُو
عَذَابًا إِنَّمَا يَدْعُوا حِزْبَهُ لِتَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ السَّعْيِ

«Indeed *Shayṭān* is an open enemy to you so take him as an enemy. He invites his followers only that they may become the denizens of the blazing Fire»

[*Fātir* (35): 6]

¹ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Bustān al-Wā'iẓīn*, p. 27

أَفَتَخِذُونَهُ وَدُرْيَشَةَ أُولَئِكَ أَمْ مُؤْمِنُوْكُمْ عَدُوٌّ
 يُنَسِّلِ الظَّالِمِينَ بَدْلًا ﴿١٠﴾

«Will you then take him and his offspring as friends and protectors besides Him while they are open enemies to you? Wretched it is as an exchange for the wrong-doers»

[*al-Kahf* (18): 50]

Shayṭān took an oath saying,

فَالْقَاتِلُ فِي عَرَبِكَ
 لَا غَيْرَنَّهُمْ أَجْعَلْنَاهُنَّ إِلَّا عَبْدَكَ مِنْهُمْ الْمُخْلَصُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

«By Your Might! I will surely misguide them all, except Your chosen slaves amongst them»

[*Sād* (38): 82-83]

It is for this reason that we have been encouraged to seek refuge with Allāh from the accursed *Shayṭān*.

2.2 *Isti'ādhah* for recitation

With regards reciting the Qur'ān, Allāh, Exalted is He says,

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ
 فَلَا تَسْتَوْدِي إِلَيْهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَنِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّمَا لِلَّهِ سُلْطَانٌ
 عَلَى الَّذِينَ مَا مَسَوْا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ فَرَسُوْكَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّمَا
 سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّنُونَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ

«When you wish to read [lit: have read] the Qur'ān, seek refuge with Allāh from the accursed *Shayṭān*.

Indeed he has no power over those who believe and put their trust only in their Lord. His power is only over those who follow him and join partners with Him»

[*an-Nahl* (16): 99-100]

A group of the reciters and scholars, from amongst them Ḥamza, ibn Sīrīn, Ibrāhīm an-Nakha'ī and Dāwūd adh-Dhāhirī, were of the opinion that one seeks refuge after the completion of recitation, taking to the literal sense of this verse. They also stated that the reason for doing so would be to repress self-astonishment at the completion of an action of worship.

A second opinion voiced is that one seeks refuge before and after the recitation. However the famous, well-known opinion, which is the opinion of the majority is that one seeks refuge before recitation in order to safeguard oneself from the whisperings of *Shayṭān*.² This group understood the meaning of the verse to be, 'When you wish to read the Qur'ān...' in the same sense as the verse,

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قَسْطَمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا
وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى الْعَرَافِي

«...When you intend to stand for prayer [lit: have stood for prayer], wash your faces and forearms...»

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 6]

Abū Dāwūd records on the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī that,

When the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) stood at night [for prayer, he would commence the prayer] by saying the *takbir* and then saying, "SubḥānākAllākumma wa bishām dīka,

² ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 32-33; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 81-86

wa tabārakasmuka, wa ta'ālā jadduka, wa lā ilāha gbayruk.¹³
 Then he would say, "Lā ilāha illAllāh"¹⁴ three times, then he would say, "Allābu Akbar" three times and then he would say, "A'ūdhu billāhi as-Samī' al-'Alīm min ash-Shayṭāni-r-rajīm - min hamzibī wa nafkhibī wa nafathī"¹⁵

Abū Dāwūd reports on the authority of Nāfi' bin Jubayr, from his father who said,

I saw the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) saying when he commenced the prayer, "*Allābu akbar kabīra*"¹⁶ three times, "*Alhamdulillābi kathīra*"¹⁷ three times and "*SubbānAllābi bukratan wa aṣīla*"¹⁸ three times. Then he said, "*Allāhumma innī a'ūdhūbikā min-ash-Shayṭāni-r-rajīm, min hamzibī wa nafkhibī wa nafathī*"¹⁹

¹³ You are glorified O Allāh and praised! Your Name is Blessed; Your Majesty is Exalted and none has the right to be worshipped save You.

¹⁴ There is none worthy of worship save You.

¹⁵ I take refuge with Allāh, the All-Seeing, the All-Knowing from the accursed *Shayṭān*: from his madness, arrogance and poetry.

Abū Dāwūd [Eng. Trans. 1/198 #774] and at-Tirmidhī #242. It was declared ṣahīḥ by al-Albānī, *al-Imrā'ā*²⁰ #341

¹⁶ Allāh is the Greatest, very great

¹⁷ Praise and thanks be to Allāh, again and again

¹⁸ Glorified is Allāh, morning and evening

¹⁹ O Allāh! I take refuge with You from *Shayṭān* - from his madness, arrogance and poetry.

Abū Dāwūd [Eng. Trans. 1/196 #763] and ibn Mājah #807. It has been ruled ḏa'iif with this wording by al-Albānī, *Da'iif Abū Dāwūd* #160

However there is a ṣahīḥ hadith reported by ibn Mājah #808 on the authority of

ash-Shâfi'i and Abû Hanifah were of the opinion that that the wording of the *isti'âdha* should be, '*A'ûdbu billâhi min-asb-Shaytâni-r-rajîm*' such that it conforms to the aforementioned verse in *Sûrah an-Nâyl*. Ahmad said that it was most befitting to say, '*A'ûdbu billâhi min-asb-Shaytâni-r-rajîm innâbû huwa as-Samî'u-l-'Alîm*' such that the person combines the wording of the verse of *Sûrah an-Nâyl* and *Sûrah Fussilat*. Some of the Shâfi'i's said that one should say, '*A'ûdbu billâhi-s-Samî'i-l-'Alîm min asb-Shaytâni-r-rajîm*' to conform to the *hadîth* of Abû Dâwûd and also to combine the wording of both verses.¹⁰ It is best to use the wordings as reported by the authentic *ahâdîth* on this occasion.¹¹

The majority of scholars are of the opinion that *isti'âdha* is recommended and not obligatory. However it is reported from 'Atâ' ibn Abî Rabâh that it is obligatory to say it within the prayer and outside the prayer when one desires to recite the Book of Allâh. ar-Râzî stated that the proof for this opinion was that the verse, "*seek refuge with Allâh*" is mentioned in the imperative, that the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) persisted in uttering it throughout his life, and that it serves as a protective barrier from *Shaytân* - therefore if an obligation can only be fulfilled by a particular means, that means also becomes an obligation.¹²

ibn Mas'ûd that the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) used to say the above words of seeking refuge when he commenced the prayer. Refer to al-Albâni, *Inwâ'*, vol. 2, pg. 55
As for the supplication, it is authentically reported in Muslim that it was said, without the repetitions, by one of the Companions in prayer upon which the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) said, "Wonderful for it [the supplication] is that the doors of heaven were opened for it."

¹⁰ ar-Râzî, vol. 1, pg. 68; ibn 'Âdil, vol. 1, pg. 79-81

¹¹ ibn Kathîr, vol. 1, pg. 34

¹² ibn Kathîr, vol. 1, pg. 34; ar-Râzî, vol. 1, pg. 67, ibn 'Âdil, vol. 1, pg. 87-88

Isti'ādhah is for the recitation in prayer - this being the opinion of Abū Ḥanīfah and Muḥammd. As such it is to be said before one starts reciting *al-Fātiḥah*, and it is only said if one is reciting himself. In the eyes of others, such as Abū Yūsuf, *isti'ādhah* is for the prayer, and hence according to this, the one praying would state it, even if he himself was not himself reciting.¹³

Shaykh Mashhūr Ḥasan Salmān said,

It is clear that *isti'ādhah* is legislated in every *rak'ah* [of prayer]. This is due to the generality of His saying,

فَإِذَا قرأتُ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَبِدْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الْجَنِينِ ﴿٦﴾

«When you wish to read the Qur'ān then seek refuge with Allāh from the accursed *Shayṭān*»

This is the most correct opinion of the Shāfi'I school and declared to be the strongest opinion by ibn Ḥazm.¹⁴

2.3 The meaning of *Isti'ādhah*

al-Hāfiẓ ibn al-Qayyim, may Allāh have mercy upon him, explained the meaning of *a'ūdhu* (I take refuge) in a beautiful way. He said,

Know that the verb '*ādha*' and its derivatives carry the meaning of being careful and wary, guarding and fortifying, being rescued and victorious. Its essential meaning is to flee from that which you fear will harm you to that which will safeguard you from it. This is why the

¹³ ar-Rāzī, vol. 1, pg. 68; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 89-90; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 34

¹⁴ Mashhūr Ḥasan Salmān, *al-Qawl al-Mubin fi Akhbar'i al-Muṣallīn*, pg. 109. Refer also to an-Nawawī, *al-Majmu'*, vol. 3, pg. 270; al-Albānī, *Tamām al-Minnab*, pp. 176-177

2.3 The meaning of *Isti'ādha*

one you seek refuge with is named *ma'ādb* and *majā'* (the source of refuge and recourse).

In the ḥadīth there occurs, ‘When the daughter of al-Jawn entered upon the Prophet (ﷺ) [after their marriage] he moved his hand [to touch her] and she said, “I take refuge with Allāh from you.” He said, “Indeed you have sought refuge with the *Ma'ādb*, return and rejoin your family.”’¹⁵

Therefore the meaning of *a'ūdhū* is: I take refuge, guard myself and take precaution. There are two opinions concerning the basis of this verb. The first is that it is derived from the meaning of *as-satar*, covering or protection, and the second is that it is derived from the meaning of *luzūm al-mijāvara*, firmly adhering to that which adjoins it.¹⁶ As for the first opinion then the Arabs used to say with regards to a house that is in the shade of a tree - *'uwādha*. Therefore when this house did *'ādha* with this tree by being built under its shade the Arabs named it *'uwādha*. The same applies to the one who takes refuge for he seeks protection and cover from his enemy with the one he seeks refuge with. As for the second opinion, then the Arabs used to say regarding flesh that was stuck to a bone and could not be removed, *'uwādha*, because of its refusal to be dislodged from it. The same applies to the one taking refuge for he sticks firmly to the one he is seeking refuge with and refuses to be distanced. Both of these opinions are correct for seeking refuge includes both. The one taking refuge seeks protection with the one he is seeking refuge with and sticks firmly to him. His heart attaches itself to him and holds firm just as the child sticks close to its father when threatened by an enemy.

¹⁵ Bukhārī [Eng. Trans. 7/181 #181, 182].

¹⁶ ar-Rāzī, vol. 1, pg. 70; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 94

The same applies to the one taking refuge for he flees from his enemy who desires his destruction to his Lord, throwing himself between His hands, holding firmly to Him, sticking close to Him and resorting to Him. Now, know that the reality of seeking refuge that is established in the heart of the believer surpasses, and is beyond these descriptions, for these serve only as examples and representations. As for that which is established in the heart in its taking refuge, holding fast to, and its throwing itself before its Lord, its need of Him and its submission and humility before Him, then all of this is beyond description. In a similar vein, love of Him and fear of Him can only be described in a deficient way for they cannot truly be understood except through experiencing them. This is similar to the case of one trying to describe the pleasure of sexual intercourse to one who is impotent and feels no sexual urges. No matter how much you describe it and how many examples you give, never will he truly understand it. However if you were to describe it to one who does have these urges and has had intercourse then he will understand your descriptions completely. If it is asked: When one is commanded to take refuge with Allāh why does the form of the command carry a *sīn* and *ta*? For example in His saying,

فَاسْتَغْفِرُ لِلّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَنِ لَوْلٰجِي

«Seek protection (*fasta'idh*) with Allāh from the accursed *Shaytān*»

[*an-Nahl* (16):98]

Yet one says, 'I take refuge' (*a'ūdhu*) and 'I took refuge' (*ta'awwadhtu*) without including the *sīn* and *ta*?

The reply is: the *sīn* and *ta* are grammatically used to denote a person's seeking something. Therefore when

one says, '*Asta'idbu* with Allāh' he is saying, 'I seek refuge with Him.' When he says, '*Astaghfirullāh*' he is saying, 'I seek the forgiveness of Allāh.' However, when the person says, 'I take refuge (*a'ūdhu*) with Allāh' he is actually implementing and realising what he seeks because he sought refuge and protection with Allāh. There is a clear difference between actually taking refuge and seeking refuge. Therefore, because the one who is seeking refuge is actually recourse to Allāh and holding firmly to Him, he says the verb that denotes this rather than saying the verb that denotes that he only seeks this. The opposite is true for the saying, '*Astaghfirullāh*' (I seek the forgiveness of Allāh) for in this case the person is asking Allāh to forgive him. Therefore when he says, '*Astaghfirullāh*' he is implementing what he desires because the meaning of this statement is, 'I ask Allāh that He forgive me.' This then is the best way of seeking refuge and it was for this reason that the Prophet ﷺ used to say, "I take refuge with Allāh from the accursed *Shaytān*" and, "I take refuge with Allāh's perfect words" and, "I take refuge with the Might and Power of Allāh" saying, '*a'ūdhu*' rather than '*asta'idbu*.' Indeed this is what Allāh taught him to say with His words,

قلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ﴿١﴾

«Say: I take refuge with the Lord of Daybreak»

[*al-Falaq* (113):1]

قلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ﴿١﴾

«Say: I take refuge with the Lord of Mankind»

[*an-Nās* (114):1]

Employing the word '*a'ūdhu*' rather than '*asta'idbu*'.¹⁷

¹⁷ ibn al-Qayyim, *Bada'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pg. 439-441; *Tafsīr al-Qayyim*, pp. 538-541

2.4 Everyone is need of *isti'ādhah*

The order to take refuge is left general and as such it does not specify one set of people from another. Moreover the Messengers and Prophets would also do *isti'ādhah* and this further serves to prove that everybody is in need of this statement.

Nūh, peace be upon him, said,

فَالْرَّبِّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَشْلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَلَا
تَعْفِرُ لِي وَتَرْحَمُنِي أَكُونُ مِنَ الظَّاهِرِينَ (٤٧)

«My Lord! I take refuge with You from asking You for anything about which I have no knowledge»

[*Hud* (11): 47]

for which he was honoured with two things, peace and blessings:

قِيلَ يَنْفُخُ
أَفِيظِ سَلَامٍ مَّا وَرَكِبَتْ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ أَمْمٍ مَّمَّا مَعَكَ

«It was said, ‘Nūh, descend with peace from Us and with blessings on you and on the nations that will issue from those who are with you...’»

[*Hud* (11): 48]

Yūsuf, peace be upon him, said,

مَعَادِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّ الْأَحْسَنِ مَثَوَّبٌ

«Allāh is my refuge! He is my lord and has been good to me where I live»

[*Yūsuf* (12): 23]

for which he was honoured with two things, evil and lust being averted from him:

كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرَفَ عَنْهُ الْشَّرِّ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ

«That happened so we might avert from him all evil and lust»

[*Yūsuf* (12): 24]

Mūsā, peace be upon him, said,

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنْهَلِينَ ﴿٦﴾

«I take refuge with Allāh from being one of the ignorant!»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 67]

for which he was honoured with two things, the lifting of the accusation and the bringing back to life of the dead person. He also said,

وَلَيَ عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ أَنْ تَرْجُمُونِ ﴿٧﴾

«I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord against your stoning me»

[*ad-Dukhān* (44): 20]

وَقَالَ مُوسَى إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ إِنِّي لَأَنْتَمْ أَنْتُمْ الْمُحْسَابُونَ ﴿٨﴾

«I take refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every proud man who does not have faith on the Day of Reckoning»

[*Ghāfir* (40): 27]

for which he was honoured with two things, the destruction of his enemy and his inheriting their lands and homes.

The mother of Maryam said,

وَإِنِّي سَمِّيَّتْهَا مَرْيَمٍ وَإِنِّي أُعِيدُهَا لِي
وَذُرْتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الْجَيْرِ (٣٦)

«I have named her Maryam and placed her and her children in Your safekeeping from the accursed *Shayṭān*»

[*Āli Imrān* (3): 36]

for which she was honoured with two things:

فَنَقْبَلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولِ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا تَبَاتَ حَسَنَةً

«Her Lord accepted her with approval and made her grow in health and beauty»

[*Āli Imrān* (3): 37]

Maryam, when she saw the Angel, said,

قَالَتْ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقْبِيَنِي (١٩)

«I take refuge from you with the All-Merciful»

[*Maryam* (19): 18]

and was honoured with two things: a son without father, and a son who absolved her of the accusations against her while still in his cradle.¹⁸

¹⁸ ar-Rāzī, vol. 1, pg. 77; ibn ‘Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 105-106

2.5 The virtues of *isti'ādhah*

There are a number of texts showing us the virtue of *isti'ādhah*:

1. Bukhārī reports on the authority Sulaymān ibn Sarad that,

Two men abused each other in the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ) while we were sitting with him. One of the two abused the other while in a state of rage, his face turned red. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "I know a statement that if he were to say, what he is experiencing would leave him. If only he were to say, 'I take refuge with Allāh from the accursed *Shayṭān*.'"¹⁹

2. Ahmad reports on the authority Abū Dharr that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

"O Abū Dharr! Take refuge with Allāh from the satans amongst men and jinn." I said, 'Are their satans amongst men?' He replied, 'Yes.'²⁰

3. Abū Dāwūd reports on the authority ibn 'Abbās that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

"If anyone seeks refuge with [you] for the sake of Allāh then grant him refuge. If any asks of you for the sake of Allāh then grant his request."²¹

¹⁹ Bukhārī [Eng. Trans. 8/87 #136]

²⁰ Ahmad [#21546, 21552]. The ḥadīth has two routes of narration both which are weak as mentioned by Muqbil bin Hadi, *Takbrij ibn Kathir*, vol. 1, pg. 98

²¹ Abū Dāwūd [Eng. Trans. 3/1416 #5089], as-Suyūtī #8411 ruled it to be ḥasan and an-Nawawī, *Riyād as-Salihin* #1732 said it was shāhīh as did al-Albānī #6021, *as-Saḥīhab* #253

4. at-Tirmidhī records on the authority of Ma'qal bin Yasār that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

"Whoever says, 'A'ūdhu billābi-s-Sam'i-i-l-Ālim' [one narration adds, 'mina-sh-Shaytāni-r-Rajīm'] three times upon awaking and recites the last three verses of Sūrah al-Hasbr, Allāh will appoint seventy thousand Angels over him to invoke blessings upon him until he goes to sleep. Were he to die on that day he would have died as a martyr. Whoever says this when he goes to sleep, the same holds true."²²

5. Muslim records on the authority of 'Ā'ishah that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say,

"I take refuge with Your pleasure from Your displeasure; I take refuge with Your forgiveness from Your punishment; I take refuge with You from You."²³

Ibn al-Jawzī said,

Know that the one who is taking refuge with Allāh, the Great, from the accursed *Shayṭān* has clung to the firm Rope of Allāh. I take refuge with Allāh from all sins and actions of transgression! I take refuge with Allāh from misguidance and treachery! I take refuge with Allāh from the Displeasure of *ar-Rahmān*!

O My brother! Know that when the servant clings to the rope of the created king he is saved from the evil of the

²² at-Tirmidhī #2922 and Abīmad #20306. at-Tirmidhī said it was ḥasan gharib and in some texts gharib and this seems most correct, al-Albānī #5732 ruled it da'if.

²³ Muslim #751

oppressors. Therefore it far more befitting and appropriate for the one who takes refuge with the Lord of the Universe from the accursed enemy, *Shayṭān*, that he be saved.²⁴

2.6 The meaning of *Shayṭān*

It is said that the word *Shayṭān* is derived from *shatāna* which means to be distanced, and indeed *Shayṭān* is far removed from any good whatsoever. It is also said that the name is derived from *shāṭa*, which means to burn because he is made from fire. Others said that both meanings are correct. However, the first meaning is most correct and is proven by the usage of the Arabs.²⁵

Shayṭān is one of the Jinn as proven by His saying,

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ أَسْجُدُوا
لَآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَنَسِقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ²⁶

«When We said to the Angels, ‘Prostrate yourselves to Ādām,’ they prostrated with the exception of Iblīs. He was of the Jinn and wantonly deviated from his Lord’s command»

[*al-Kahf* (18): 50]

as such he is made of fire,

وَخَلَقَ الْجَنَّانَ مِنْ مَارِجِ مِنْ نَارٍ²⁷

«...and He created Jinn from a fusion of fire»

[*ar-Rahmān* (55): 15]

²⁴ Ibn al-Jawzī, pg. 26

²⁵ ibn Kathir, vol. 1, pg. 35

and it was because of this that he refused to prostrate to Ādām saying,

فَالآنْ أَنْهَا بِرِّيَّتِهِ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ

«I am better than him, You created me from fire
but You created him from clay»

[*Sād* (38):76]

فَالآنْ أَكُنْ

لَا نَسْجُدُ لِشَرِّ خَلْقَتَهُ مِنْ صَلْصَلٍ إِنْ حَمَلَ مَسْتَوْنَ

«I will not prostrate myself to a human being whom
You have created from dried clay formed from fetid
black mud»

[*al-Hijr* (15): 33]

ash-Shanqīṭī comments on this argument used by *Shayṭān* by saying,

This analogy employed by Iblīs of his racial origin, which is fire, to that of Ādām, which is clay, and his deriving from this that he is better than Ādām and that it was not desired for him to prostrate to one who was lesser than he, despite the existence of a clear and unequivocal text, which is His saying, "*Prostrate to Ādām*", is called *fā'id al-i'tibār* according to the terminology of the scholars of *usūl*. Therefore, anyone who rejects a clear and unequivocal text of revelation due to analogy, his precedent for this lies with Iblis.

This analogy of Iblis, may Allāh curse him, is false due to three reasons:

- 1) It is *fā'id al-i'tibār* due to its opposing the clear text as has just

preceded.

- 2) We do not accept that fire is better than clay, rather clay is better than fire. This is because the substance of fire is inconsistency, thoughtlessness, corruption and disintegration; whereas the substance of clay is composure and correction. If you want to understand the ability and excellence of clay, look to the resplendent garden and what it contains of delicious fruits, elegant flowers and fine scents, you will then come to know that clay is indeed better than fire.

- 3) Even if we were to accept, for the sake of argument, that fire is better than clay, this does not necessitate that Iblīs is better than Ādam. The excellence of the foundation does not necessitate the excellence of the off-shoot, rather it is possible that the foundation be exalted and the off-shoot be disgraced. The poet said,

If you were to boast about fathers who possess
excellence

We would say: you have spoken truthfully, but how
evil are their offspring!²⁶

2.7 Summary

So in summary, the statement means, ‘I take refuge with Allāh, and no one else, from *Shayṭān* that he may harm me in my religion, or divert me away from a duty that Allāh has imposed upon me.’²⁷ It is an implicit acknowledgement of the power of Allāh and one’s own weakness and inability to combat the unseen enemy, *Shayṭān*. If a person is killed by a physical enemy, he is a martyr; if he is killed by the unseen enemy, he is disavowed. If a person is overcome by a

²⁶ ash-Shanqīf, vol. 1, pg. 59-60

²⁷ at-Tabarī, vol. 1, pg. 76

physical enemy, he will be rewarded; if he is overcome by the unseen enemy, he will be put to severe trial. The servant cannot see *Shayṭān* but *Shayṭān* can see him, so he in turn takes refuge with One who can see *Shayṭān* and whom *Shayṭān* cannot see.²⁸

Ibn al-Qayyim said,

It is necessary to know that performing sins is detrimental and harmful to the servant. The harm that sins cause to the heart is comparable to the differing levels of harm that various types of poison cause to the body. Indeed is there a single evil that occurs in the world or will occur in the Hereafter except that its cause is sin?

What caused our parents to be ejected from Paradise - the land of delight, felicity and joy - to the land of pain, misery and affliction?

What caused Iblis to be ejected from enjoying the company of the Angels to being debased and cursed? What caused his outward and inward form to be disfigured such that he took on the most vile of features and his inner features even worse? What caused him to become distant [from Allāh] after being close; from being a recipient of His mercy to being a recipient of His curse; from being beautiful to being ugly; from being in Paradise to being condemned to the blazing Fire; from being a believer to being a disbeliever; from being the friend of Allāh to being His greatest enemy; from being a person devoted to the glorification of his Lord to being a person of *kufr*, *shirk*, lies and shameful deeds; from wearing the raiment of faith to wearing the raiment of disbelief, sin and disobedience causing him to become completely worthless and insignificant in the Sight

²⁸ ibn Kathir, vol. 1, pg. 34

of Allāh? What caused him to become an outcast - despised and humiliated - such that he became a leader for every sinner and criminal? O Allāh we take refuge with You from opposing Your command and taking on board Your prohibition!²⁹

²⁹ ibn al-Qayyim, *ad-Da'i' wa ad-Dwā'i'*, pp. 56-57

CHAPTER III

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the Name of Allāh,
The All-Merciful, The Most Merciful

This statement is given the title *basmAllāh* as an abbreviation. In the same way the statement, '*Lā hawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh*' is called the *hawqala*; '*Lā ilāha illā Allāh*' is called the *haylala*; '*Al-hamdu lillāh*' is called the *hamdala*; '*Subbān Allāh*' is called the *sabbala*; '*Hayya 'alā as-Salāh*' is called the *bay'ala*; and '*Hasbun Allāh*' is called the *basbala*.¹

3.1 The wisdom of the *basmAllāh*

From the manners that Islām has taught us is to begin our actions by mentioning the Name of Allāh.² The purpose behind this is far-reaching and manifold:

1. It brings Allāh to mind before one does the action.

¹ ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 116

² at-Tabarī, vol. 1, pg. 78

2. It prevents one from doing evil actions.
3. It aids one in attaining Allāh's support and succour in that action.
4. It reminds one of the purpose, the source of fulfilment, the source of blessings for that action and its final destination.³

Ibn al-Qayyim explained this final point further,

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

وَلَنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يَعْنِدُنَا

«There is not a single thing except that its depositories and treasures are with Us»

[*al-Hijr* (15): 21]

This verse comprises a [great] treasure from the treasures [of the Qur'ān], this being that nothing is sought except from the One who possesses its depositories and treasures, the One in whose hands lie the keys to these treasures. Seeking [things] from anyone else is seeking something from one who does not possess them or possess any authority over them.

The saying of Allāh, Exalted is He,

وَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ رِبِّكُمْ أَكْثَرَهُنَّ

«...and that to your Lord is the final goal»

[*an-Najm* (53): 42]

comprises an immense treasure, this being that every desired objective that is not desired for His sake and is not

³ an-Nasafī, vol. 1, pg. 13; al-Baqā'ī, vol. 1, pg. 12; Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 90; ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Explanation of the Three Fundamental Principles of Islam*

connected [in any form or fashion] to Him is temporary and soon to disappear for its final goal is not with Him. The final goal lies only with the One to whom all matters find their conclusion, terminating at His creation, will, wisdom, and knowledge. Therefore He is the source of every desired matter.

Everything that is loved - if it is not loved for His sake then this love is nothing but distress and punishment. Every action that is not performed for His sake then it is wasted and severed. Every heart that does not reach Him is wretched and veiled from achieving its success and happiness.

Therefore Allāh has gathered everything that could be desired from Him in His saying,

وَلَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يَعْنَدُنَا

«There is not a single thing except that its depositories and treasures are with Us»

[*al-Hijr* (15): 21]

and He has gathered everything that is done for His sake in His saying,

وَإِنَّمَا لِرَبِّكَ الْمُتَهَبِّنُ

«...and that to your Lord is the final goal»

[*an-Najm* (53): 42]

Therefore there is nothing beyond Allāh that deserves to be sought and nothing finds its conclusion with other than Him.

The *ba* (with) is known as the *ba* of *istī'ānah* or seeking help and support, meaning that the servant is seeking the aid of Allāh in the

action he is about to perform, thereby expressing his servitude to Him.⁴

3.2 Meaning of Allāh

"With the Name of Allāh" meaning I start with every name that belongs to Allāh, the Exalted. This is because the word 'name' is singular and in the genitive form and therefore it includes all of the Beautiful Names.⁵

"Allāh" He is the Lord, the One who is worshipped, the One deserving of being singled out for worship due to the Perfect Godly Attributes that He is described with.⁶ Ibn 'Uthaymīn states,

This is the Name of His from which all other Names follow on as occurs in His saying,

الرَّحْمَنُ كَتَبَ أَنْزَلَنَا إِلَيْكَ لِتُنْهِرَ أَنَّاسًا مِّنَ الظَّلَمِنَتِ
إِلَى النُّورِ يَا ذِينَ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صَرْطَنِ الْمَرْيِزِ الْعَبِيدِ ①
اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

«Alif Lām Rā. This is a Book which We sent down to you in order that you might lead mankind out of darkness into the light by the permission of their Lord, to the Path of the All-Mighty, the one worthy of all praise: Allāh, to who belongs everything that

⁴ Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 126; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pp. 64-65; ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Explanation of the Three Fundamental Principles of Islam*

⁵ as-Sa'dī

⁶ at-Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pp. 82-83; as-Sa'dī

is in the heavens and the earth.»

[*Ibrāhīm* (14): 1-2]

So in this saying of Allāh, the Most High, the noun which is the name of the Majestic Lord, 'Allāh' is not a descriptive attribute, rather it is a word which follows as an explanation and clarification of what has preceded.⁷

at-Tabarī said,

'Allāh is derived from *al-ilāh*, the *hamzah* which is the *fa* of the noun has been removed and so the *lām*, which is the 'ayn of the noun, meets with the *lām* which is additional and has a *sukūn* on it, hence this *lām* mixes with the other and becomes one with a *shaddah*. As regards the meaning of Allāh, it has been reported to us on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās who said, "He is the One who everything takes as deity (*ilāh*) and is worshipped by every object of creation." He then quotes his isnād to al-Dāhhāk who said that 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās said, 'Allāh is the One possessing divinity (*dhū'l-ilābiyyah*) and deserving worship (*'ubūdīyyah*) from all His creation.' He then said, 'If someone were to ask: what is the proof that *ilābiyyah* is worship (*ibādah*), and that the word *al-ilāh* means *al-ma'būd* (one who is worshipped), and that it follows the form *fa'ilā yaf'alū*?' He said, 'The word *ta'alluh* is undoubtedly on the form *tafa'u* deriving from *aliba ya'lahu* and the meaning of *aliba*, when spoken, is *'abada* (to worship). The verbal noun of this word has also been mentioned proving that the Arabs articulated it upon the form *fa'ilā yaf'alū* without adding anything. Sufyān ibn Waki' narrated to us; ...; that ibn 'Abbās recited,

⁷ Ibn 'Uthaymin, pg. 36

“...and abandon you and your *ilāha?*”⁸

and said, “i.e. and your worship,” and he said, “He was one who was worshipped and did not worship.” He also quoted another isnād to ibn ‘Abbās where he said of this verse, ‘Pharaoh was worshipped and did not worship,’ and he quoted a similar narration from Mujāhid. Then he said, ‘The opinion of ibn ‘Abbās and Mujāhid clearly shows that the meaning of *alīha* is ‘*abāda* and that the word *ilāha* is the verbal noun.’ He then quoted a ḥadīth on the authority of Abū Sa‘id that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, ‘The mother of ‘Īsā gave him to a scribe that he may teach him. The teacher said, ‘Write *bismillāh*.’ ‘Īsā said, ‘Do you know what Allāh is? He is the God of the gods (*ilāhu'l-ālīha*).’”

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allāh have mercy upon him, said,

‘This Noble Name has ten characteristics in its physical wording that are specific to it,’ he mentioned them and then said, ‘as regards its specific characteristics with regards to meaning, the most knowledgeable of creation (ﷺ) said, “I cannot enumerate praise of You, You are as You have praised Yourself.” How is it possible to enumerate the specificities of a Name, the object of which has every single perfection without restriction, who deserves all commendation and praise, all lauding and veneration, who possesses all magnificence and perfection, and all nobility and beauty? All goodness, beneficence, generosity, grace, and gifts belong to Him and come from Him. This Name is not mentioned over some-

⁸ *al-A'rif* (7): 127, i.e. ibn ‘Abbās and Mujāhid read it with the reading *ilāha* as opposed to the more standard *ālīha*. The full verse reads, “The ruling circle of Pharaoh’s people said, ‘Are you going to leave Mūsā and his people to cause corruption in the earth and abandon you and your *ālīha*?’”

thing paltry except that it becomes plentiful, nor at a time of fear except that it removes it, nor at a time of hardship except that it lifts it, nor at a time of distress and worry except that it alleviates it, nor at a time of constraint except that it liberates it. No weak creature depends upon it except that it grants him strength, nor one undergoing humiliation except it grants him honour, nor one who is poor except that it leads him to richness, nor one who is left alone except that it grants him comfort, nor one who is overcome except that it aids him and supports him, nor one in a state of dire need except that it lifts his need, nor one who is run astray except that it draws him back. It is the Name through which hardship is removed, through which blessings descend, through which supplications are answered, through which the foot does not slip, through which evil is repressed and good is promoted. It is the Name through which the heavens and earth stand, because of which the heavenly scripture descended, the Messengers were sent, the legal laws legislated, the legal punishments established, and Jihād legislated. Through this Name is the creation divided into the felicitous and the wretched, and through it does the Undeniable Reality come to pass and the Final Convulsion occur. Because of it are the Scales erected, the Path laid out, and the Paradise and Hell made ready. Through it is the Lord of the worlds worshipped and praised, and to establish its rights were the Messengers sent. It is about it that the questions will be asked in the grave and on the Day of Resurrection. Because of it did the dispute arise and to it one goes for judgment. Love and hate is based on it. Felicitous is one who has come to know it and establish its right, wretched is one who is ignorant of it and leaves off its right. It is the core of the creation and the command and through it do both stand and become firm, and to it do they end. ...

"Our Lord, You have not created this for nothing. Transcendent are You! Safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire."⁹

to the end of his words, may Allāh, the Exalted, have mercy upon him.¹⁰

The action that the servant intends to do has been omitted in the sentence in order to generalise the statement; hence no matter what the servant intends to do, the *basmAllāh* is applicable to it. When the servant wishes to do an action and says this statement, that action he is about to do is implied in the sentence, and we understand that the action is to come at the end of the sentence for two vital reasons:

1. To seek blessings by beginning with the name of Allāh.
2. To express the fact that the action is only for Allāh.

Therefore it is as if the servant is saying 'I seek the help of Allāh, with every Name of His, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful, in the particular action I am about to do.'¹¹

⁹ *Āli 'Imrān* (3): 191

¹⁰ *Fath al-Majid*, pg. 15

¹¹ an-Nasāfi, vol. 1, pg. 13; Zarnakhs̄hārī, vol. 1, pg. 46; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 17; as-Sā'dī; ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Explanation of the Three Fundamental Principles of Islām*

3.3 Legal Rulings to do with the *BasmAllāh*

The scholars are agreed that the *basmAllāh* comprises part of the verse of *Sūrah an-Nāmī* wherein Allāh says,

فَلَمَّا كَانَ يَأْتِي
الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَتَىٰهُمْ بِكِتَابٍ
إِنَّهُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا مَنْ شَاءَ مِنْ رَبِّنَا
وَلَهُ هُنَّ عَبْدُنَا وَلَهُ هُنَّ بَشَرٌ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَكْبَرُ
اللَّهُ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

«She said, 'O eminent ones, indeed to me has been delivered a noble letter. Indeed it is from Sulaymān and it [reads], "With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful"»

[*an-Nāmī* (27): 29-30]

However the scholars have differed as to whether or not this statement comprises a verse of the Qur'ān when it is found in the beginning of each *Sūrah* and they have fallen into four opinions:

1. That it is a verse of every *Sūrah* except *Sūrah at-Tawbah*.

This was the opinion of 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās, ibn 'Umar, ibn Zubair, Abū Hurayrah, 'Aṭā', Ṭāwūs, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Makhūl, az-Zuhrī, 'Abdullāh bin Mubārak, ash-Shāfi'i, Alḥmad - in one of the narrations from him, Ishāq bin Rahawayyah and Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim bin Sallām.

2. That it is not a verse of any *Sūrah* of the Qur'ān at all and that it is placed at the beginning of every *Sūrah* merely to distinguish it from another.

This was the opinion of Mālik, Abū Hanīfah and their compa-

ions. Abū Dāwūd records on the authority of ibn ‘Abbās (*radiyAllāhu ‘anhu*) that,

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) did not use to know the beginning and end of a *Sūrah* until “*With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful*” was revealed.¹²

3. That it is a verse of *al-Fatiḥah* but not of any other *Sūrah* or it is part of the first verse of every *Sūrah*.

This is another opinion reported from ash-Shāfi‘ī but it is *gharib* (odd).

4. That it is an independent verse of the Qur’ān heading every *Sūrah* but not actually part of that *Sūrah*.

This is the opinion of Dāwūd and Ahmād - in the second of the two narrations from him. Abū Bakr ar-Rāzī also relates this from Abū al-Ḥasan al-Karkhī and these two are from the greatest of the Hanafī scholars.

As regard to whether one should recite it loudly in prayer, the *fiqh* of this branches off from the difference mentioned above.

Those who follow the second and fourth opinions are not of the view that one recites it loudly. Indeed Mālik was of the opinion that one does not recite it at all, depending upon the literal sense of the following hadīth and its likes,

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) used to commence his prayer by saying the *takbir* and reciting, “*All praise and*

¹² Abū Dāwūd Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 202 #787. Ibn Kathir said that its isnād was *sahīh* as did al-Albānī, *Sabīb Abu Dāwūd* #707

*thanks are due to Allāh*¹³

As for those who follow the first opinion, they fall into one of two opinions:

1. That one recites it loudly as it is a part of *al-Fatībah* and therefore it should be recited in the same way as the rest of the *Sūrah*.

This is the view of a group of the Ṣahābah, and a number of the scholars after them, from amongst them ash-Shāfi‘ī.

al-Hākim reports on the authority of ibn ‘Abbās (*radiy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that,

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) recited, “*With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful*” loudly.¹⁴

Bukhārī reports on the authority of Anas bin Mālik (*radiy Allāhu ‘anbu*) that he said in reply to one who asked him about the recitation of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ),

His recitation would be elongated, then he recited “*With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful*” elongating *bismillāh*, elongating *ar-Rabmān* and elongating *ar-Rahim*.¹⁵

¹³ Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 258 #1005 on the authority of ‘Ā’ishah (*radiy Allāhu ‘anha*).

¹⁴ al-Hākim, #750, wherein he said that it was ḥaḍīth. However az-Zayla‘ī, *Nash ar-Rāyah*, vol. 1, pg. 345, said that its isnād contains ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn Hisān about whom ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī said, ‘He used to fabricate ḥaḍīth.’ adh-Dhahabī mentioned the same in his *Talkībīs*

¹⁵ Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 6, pg. 513 #566

Abū Dāwūd reports on the authority of Umm Salamah (*radīy Allāhu 'anha*) that she said,

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) used to cut his recitation at each verse [pausing before going on to the next. He would recite], "*With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful*" [then] "*All praise and thanks are due to Allāh the Lord of the worlds*", [then], "*The All-Merciful, the Most Merciful*" [then], "*Master of the Day of Judgement*"¹⁶

2. That it is not to be recited loudly.

This is reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) by Bukhārī and Muslim, it is the view of a number of the Ṣahābah, and it is established from the Four *Khalīfs*. It is also the view of a group of the scholars after them from amongst them Abū Hanifah, ath-Thawrī and Ahmad.

Muslim records on the authority of 'Ā'ishah that

The Prophet (ﷺ) would commence the prayer by saying the *takbīr* and reciting, "*all praise and thanks are due to Allāh...*"¹⁷

Bukhārī and Muslim record on the authority of Anas who said,

I prayed behind the Prophet (ﷺ) and Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī and they would all commence by reciting "*All praise and thanks are due to Allāh...*"¹⁸

¹⁶ Sunan Abū Dāwūd Eng Trans., vol. 3, pp. 1120 #3990. ad-Dāruqutnī said that it has a *ṣahīḥ isnād* and it was declared *ṣahīḥ* by al-Albānī, *Saḥīḥ Abū Dāwūd* #3379

¹⁷ Muslim #606

¹⁸ Bukhārī #701 and Muslim #768

So this is a summary of the views of the scholars with regards its recitation and they are all close to each other, and all praise is due to Allāh, for they are agreed that the prayer of the one who recites it loudly or silently is valid.¹⁹

3.4 The virtues of the *basmAllāh*

There are a number of texts explaining to us the virtue of the *basmAllāh*:

1. Imām Ahmād reports on the authority of Abū Tamīmah who said,

I was riding behind the Prophet (ﷺ) when his mount stumbled and so I said, 'May Satan perish!' Upon hearing this the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Do not say 'May Satan perish' for when you say this Satan becomes exultant and grows in stature and says, 'It was by my power that I injured him.' But when you say, 'With the Name of Allāh' he becomes humiliated and grows small until he ends up the size of a fly."²⁰

2. Abū Dāwūd reports on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

There is no *wudū'* for the one who does not [commence]

¹⁹ ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pp. 36-37

²⁰ Abū Dāwūd Eng. Trans., vol. 3, pg. 1387 #4964; Ahmad #20591, 20592, 20690, and the wording is his. It was declared *sahih* by al-Hākim #7792, 7793, adh-Dhahabī, and al-Albānī #7401.

by mentioning the Name of Allāh.²¹

3. Bukhārī reports on the authority of ibn 'Abbās (*radiy Allāhu 'anhu*) that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

If, when one of you wishes to go to his wife [for sexual intercourse], he says, 'With the Name of Allāh, O Allāh! Protect us from the Satan and keep the Satan away from what You will provide us.' Then if it is decreed that they should have a child out of that act, Satan will never be able to harm him.²²

4. al-Khatīb reports on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*radiy Allāhu 'anhu*) that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

Every important matter that is not begun with, 'With the Name of Allāh' is deprived of good.²³

²¹ Abū Dāwūd Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 26 #101, and Ahmad #9417. Ibn Hajar, *Natā'ij*, vol. 1, pg. 237, quotes ibn as-Ṣalāḥ ruling the ḥadīth to be ḥasan and himself, *Talḥīḥ*, vol. 1, pg. 75, says that it has strength when taking into consideration all its routes; it was declared *ṣahīḥ* by al-Albānī #7503.

Similar ahādīth are recorded on the authority of Abū Sa'īd by Ahmad #11370, 11371; Rabāḥ ibn 'Abdur-Rahmān by Ahmad, #16651; an unknown woman by Ahmad #23236; the grandfather of Rabāḥ by Ahmad #27145-27146; Sahib ibn Sa'īd by ibn Mājah #400; the grandfather of 'Isā ibn Sabrah by ad-Dūlābī, *al-Kunā wa-l-Asmā'*, vol. 1, pg. 36; and 'Ā'ishah by al-Bazzār #261

²² Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 105 #143; Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 2, pg. 731 #3361

²³ as-Subkī, *Tabaqāt ash-Shāfi'iyyah*, vol. 1, pg. 6, and others. al-Albānī ruled it to be *da'if* jiddan in *Irwā'* #1

The ḥadīth is also recorded with various other wordings in place of 'With the Name of Allāh' such as 'with the praise of Allāh' or 'With praise' or 'With the remembrance of Allāh' by ibn Mājah #1894, Abū Dāwūd #4840 and ad-Dāruquṇī, pg. 85, al-Albānī, *al-Irwā'* #2 shows that it is *da'if*

Ibn Mas'ūd said,

Whosoever wishes to be saved from the nineteen Angels over Hellfire then let him recite, 'With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful.'²⁴

²⁴ as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 30

CHAPTER IV

الحمد لله رب العالمين ﴿١﴾

All Praises and thanks are due to Allāh

4.1 The meaning of *hamd*

The meaning of *hamd* is praise and extolling arising from ones own volition, and from love and veneration of the praised. It also carries the meaning of *ridā*, or contentment, and is the opposite of *dbamm*, or blame. Its meaning is more general and inclusive than that of *shukr*, or giving thanks, because it encompasses this as well as having the meaning of praise.¹ Furthermore *shukr* is only expressed as a response to a favour whereas *hamd* is expressed both as a response to a favour as well as a spontaneous action of *dbikr*. It is in this respect that ibn 'Abbās (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said, 'al-*Hamdulillāh* is the statement of gratitude.' 'Alī (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said, 'It is a statement that Allāh chose to be directed to Himself and something that He loves.' Abū 'Abdur-Rahmān al-Jabā'ī said, 'Prayer is gratitude, fasting is gratitude, any good that we do is gratitude, the

¹ al-Baydāwī, vol. 1, pg. 45; Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 94; Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 130; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 44; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 19

most superior form of gratitude is to say, "*All praise and thanks are due to Allāh*".²

Hence it is due to the comprehensiveness of this word that we find the Prophets showing gratitude in the Qur'ān by expressing *hamd*. Allāh commanded Nūh (alayhi-salām) saying,

فَإِذَا أَسْتَوْبَتْ أَنْتَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ عَلَى الْفَلَكِ فَقُلْ لِلْحَمْدِ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي بَرَّنَا
مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

«...Say: All praises and thanks are due to Allāh Who saved us from an oppressive people»

[*al-Mu'minūn* (23): 28]

Ibrāhīm (alayhi-salām) said,

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي
عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿٣٩﴾

«All praises and thanks are due to Allāh Who gave me Ismā'il and Ishāq in my old age...»

[*Ibrāhīm* (14): 39]

Dāwūd (alayhi-salām) and Sulaymān (alayhi-salām) said,

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَى كَيْفِيَّةِ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

«All praises and thanks are due to Allāh Who has preferred us above many of His believing servants»

[*an-Naml* (27): 15]

Allāh commanded our Prophet ﷺ saying,

² ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 44; as-Suyūtī, vol. 1, pg. 34

وَقُلْ لِلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي لَنْ يَنْجِذُولَهُ

«Say: All praise and thanks are due to Allāh Who has not begotten a son...»

[*al-Isrā'* (17): 111]

The People of Paradise will say,

وَقَالُوا لِلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْعَرَقَ

«All praises and thanks are due to Allāh Who has removed from us all grief»

[*Fatir* (35): 34]

وَهُوَ أَخْرُ دُعَوَتِهِمْ أَنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ⑥

«And the close of their supplication will be: All praises and thanks are due to Allāh, the Lord of the Universe»

[*Yūnus* (10): 10]

It is for this reason that the word *hamd* has been employed in this verse of *al-Fātiḥah*.

Some of the scholars said that *shukr* is more encompassing than *hamd* because praise is expressed by the tongue whereas *shukr* can be expressed by the tongue, heart and limbs. *Shukr* with the tongue is done by praising the Bestower of blessings; *shukr* by the limbs is done by acting in obedience to Him and abandoning actions of disobedience; *shukr* in the heart is done by recognising the magnitude of the blessing and knowing that it has been given by the grace of Allāh and not by the servants own merit.

Both opinions are correct in their own place: *hamd* is more general with respect to when it is done and *shukr* is more general with respect to how it is done.³

4.2 The import of *hamd*

In the verse the word *hamd* has been preceded by the definite article, *al*, the reason for this is to include all the different manners of praise and specify them to Him, and it is an extolling with which Allāh has praised Himself and ordered His servants to praise Him with. This meaning is further expressed in the ḥadīth in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

O Allāh! To You belongs all praise and thanks in its entirety, to You belongs the dominion in its entirety, in Your hand is all goodness in its entirety and to You returns the affair in its entirety.⁴

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

³ al-Bayḍāwī, vol. 1, pg. 44; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 44. See also al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, vol. 1, pp. 51-52

⁴ ibn Abī ad-Dunyā, *adb-Dhikr* on the authority of Anas. al-Albānī, *Da'if at-Targhib* #963 ruled it to be da'if

Similar ahādīth are recorded by al-Bayhaqī #4399, 4400, on the authority of Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās and Abū Sa'id al-Khudrī; Ahmad #23355, on the authority of Hudhayfah with a da'if isnād; al-Marwāzī, *Kitāb as-Ṣalāh*, on the authority of Abū Hurayrah. al-Albānī, *Da'if at-Targhib* #964 ruled the ḥadīth of Abū Sa'id to be mawdū' and the ḥadīth of Sa'd which mentions the first and last line as ḥasan in *Saḥīḥ at-Targhib* #1576.

وَلِهُمَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِهُمْ الَّذِينَ وَاصْبَرُوا فَنِعْمَةٌ لَهُمْ وَمَا يُكْفِرُونَ
يُقْسِمُهُمْ فِي مِنَ الْأَوْتُرِ إِذَا مَسَكُمُ الْأَشْرَارُ فَإِلَيْهِمْ يَعْتَزِزُونَ

«Everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him, and the religion belongs to Him, firmly and forever. So why do you fear anyone other than Allāh? Any blessing you have is from Allāh...»

[*an-Nāhl* (16): 52-53]

Therefore by saying *al-Ḥamdu lillāh*, the servant is praising and thanking Allāh Alone due to His greatness, unity, perfection, His Beautiful Names and Attributes and His innumerable favours and blessings that none can encompass save He. It is indeed an amazing statement that encompasses something that volumes would be unable to express and created intellects unable to enumerate! All praise belongs to Allāh!⁵

There is no mention in this verse of the adverb denoting when this praise is said (*zarf az-zamān*) or from where this praise comes from (*zarf al-makān*). However in *Sūrah Rūm* there is mention that from amongst the ‘where’s’ are the heavens and the earth - in His saying,

وَلِهِ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

«And His is all praise and thanks in the heavens and the earth»

[*Rūm* (30): 18]

and in *Sūrah Qāsās* there is mention that from amongst the ‘when’s’

⁵ al-Bayḍāwī, vol. 1, pg. 50; al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pp. 93-94; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 45; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 99; ash-Shanqītī, vol. 1, pg. 31

are in this world and in the Hereafter,

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فِي الْأَوَّلِ وَالآخِرَةِ وَلَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٧﴾

«And He is Allāh, none has the right to be worshipped besides Him. To Him belongs all praise in the beginning [this world] and in the end [the Hereafter]...»

[Qasas (28): 70]

and He said in the beginning of *Sūrah Saba'*,

لَمْ يَلْهُمْ فِي الْأَخِرَةِ وَهُوَ الْكَبِيرُ الْغَفِيرُ ﴿١﴾

«His is all the praise in the Hereafter, and He is the All-Wise, All-Aware»

[Saba' (34): 1]⁶

4.3 The virtues of *hamd*

There are a number of ahādīth that show us the great virtue of expressing *hamd*:

1. Muslim records on the authority of Anas bin Mālik (*radiy Allāhu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

Indeed Allāh is pleased at His servant when he eats some food and praises Him for it or when he drinks a drink and praises Him for it.⁷

⁶ ash-Shanqītī, vol. 1, pg. 31

⁷ Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 4, pg. 1429 #6592

al-Hasan said, 'There is no blessing except that [saying] *al-
Hamdulillāh* is better and more virtuous than it.'

2. Ibn Mājah records on the authority of Anas bin Mālik (*radiyAllābu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

Allāh does not grant a servant a favour for which he says *al-Hamdulillāh* except that what he offered [of praising] is better and more virtuous than what he took [of the favour].⁸

al-Bayhaqī commented on this by saying,

This is because the servant does not attain [the station] of praising and thanking Allāh except by His divine accord. Therefore the greater excellence [of his praising Allāh as compared to the initial blessing that Allāh bestowed upon him] is by virtue of his being blessed with the [ability to] praise Allāh and extol him and this did not exist in the initial blessing.⁹

3. al-Hakīm at-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir al-Usūl* records from Anas bin Mālik that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

If the entire world along with its contents were to be in the hand of a man from my nation and then he were to say *al-Hamdulillāh*, this statement would be better than

⁸ Ibn Mājah #3805 and it was declared ḥasan by al-Buṣayrī, *az-Zawā''id*, as-Suyū'ī, vol. 1, pg. 34, and shāfi'ī by al-Albānī, #5563

A similar ḥadīth is recorded by at-Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabir* #7794 on the authority of Abū Umārah and declared ḥa'iif by as-Suyū'ī, #7841, and ḥa'iif jiddan by al-Albānī, *ad-Da'ifah* #2011 due to the presence of a rejected additional wording.

⁹ as-Sindī #3795

[what his hand contained].¹⁰

al-Qurtubī commented upon this by saying,

In our view the meaning is that he has been given the world, then after this he has been given this statement and utters it. Therefore this statement is better than the world because the world is soon to perish whereas the statement will endure for it is from those righteous deeds that remain. Allāh said,

وَالْجَنَاحُ أَصْلِحَتْ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ تُوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ مَرْدًا

«The righteous deeds that last are better in the Sight of your Lord, for reward and better for resort»

[Maryam (19): 76]

4. Ibn Mājah records on the authority of ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

A servant from amongst the servants of Allāh said. 'O my Lord! To You belongs all praise and thanks as is required by the magnificence of Your face and greatness of Your authority.' This confused the two [recording] Angels and they did not know how to record it. So they ascended to Paradise and said, 'O our Lord! Your servant has said a statement and we do not know how to record it.' Allāh, the Mighty and Magnificent asks, despite the fact that He already knows, 'What did my servant say?' They reply, 'O Lord! He said: O my Lord! To You belongs all praise and thanks as is required by the

¹⁰ as-Suyū'ī, vol. 1, pg. 34-35, and ibn 'Asākir. as-Suyū'ī #7398, ruled it to be ḏa'if and al-Albānī #4800, ad-Da'iṭah #875 ruled it to be mawdū'.

A similar hadith has been recorded on the authority of Jābir by al-Qārī, *Muntakhab al-Fawā'id*, and ruled ḏa'if by al-Albānī, ad-Da'iṭah #876

magnificence of Your face and greatness of Your authority.' Allāh then says to them, 'Record it for my servant as he said it, then when He meets Me, I will reward him for it.'¹¹

5. Muslim records on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

Purity is half of faith, [the statement] *al-Ḥamdu lillāh* fills the scales and [the statement] *Subbān Allāh wa-l-Ḥamdu lillāh* fills what is between the heaven and the earth.¹²

6. at-Tirmidhī records on the authority of Jābir bin 'Abdullāh that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

'The most excellent *dhikr* is [the statement] *lā ilāha illa Allāh* and the most excellent supplication is [the statement] *al-Ḥamdu lillāh*.¹³

7. Ahmad records on the authority of Aswad bin Sarī' who said,

I asked the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), "Should I not recite to you words of praise that I praised my Lord, Blessed and Exalted is He, with?" He replied, "Of course! In-

¹¹ Ibn Mājah #3801, and al-Bayhaqī #4387. al-Buṣayrī, *az-Zawā'id* said, 'Its isnād contains Qudāmah ibn Ibrāhīm whom ibn Hibbān mentioned in *ath-Thiqāt*. It also contains Ṣadaqah ibn Bashīr and I have seen no one who disparaged him or authenticated him.' al-Albānī #1877, ruled it to be *da'if*.

¹² Muslim Eng Trans., vol. 1, pg. 147 #432

¹³ at-Tirmidhī #3623 and ibn Mājah #3800. It was declared *ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Hākim #1834, 1852, with adh-Dhababī agreeing, and as-Suyūtī #1253; and hasan by at-Tirmidhī and al-Albānī #1104.

deed your Lord loves praise.”¹⁴

8. Muslim records on the authority of Samurah bin Jundub that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

The most beloved statements to Allāh are four:
*Subbān Allāh, al-Hamdu lillāh, Lā ilāha ill'Allāh, Allāhu Akbar...*¹⁵

4.4 The meaning of *Rabb*

Linguistically the word *rabb* means master, owner, one who grants grace, one who sets about correcting and purifying, and one who nurtures and cultivates. It is said that the latter meaning is the core meaning of the word and the other meanings stem from it.¹⁶ When used in a possessive or conjunctive (*idafah*) structure it can be applied to other than Allāh, for example it is said *rabb ad-dār*, or the master of the house, similarly in the Qur'ān it is mentioned that Yūsuf (peace be upon him) said to one of the inmates of prison,

أَذْكُرْنِي عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ

«Mention me in the presence of your master»

[Yūsuf (12): 42]

Likewise it is mentioned in the famous ḥadīth of Jibril, when the Prophet (ﷺ) listed some of the signs of the Hour,

¹⁴ Ahmad #15586, 15590, and Bukhārī, *Adab al-Mufrad* #859, 861, 868. al-Albānī, *as-Sahihah* #3179 said it was *sahīh*.

A similar ḥadīth is recorded by Ahmad #3616 on the authority of ibn Mas'ūd.

¹⁵ Muslim #2137

¹⁶ al-Baghawī, vol. 1, pg. 52; Abū Hayyān, vol. 1, pg. 130; al-Ālāsi, vol. 1, pg. 104

...when the slave-girl gives birth to her master (*rabbatābā*)¹⁷

However the word *ar-Rabb* can only ever be applied to Allāh.¹⁸ It is one of the Names of Allāh and means the One who nurtures and sustains all of His servants through regulating the affairs and granting all types of favours and blessings. More specifically He is the One who nurtures and sustains his sincere friends by correcting and purifying their hearts, souls and manners. This is why their supplications are frequently made with this Noble Name because they seek this specific nurturing.¹⁹

as-Sa'dī said,

The Lord is the One who nourishes and sustains the whole of the creation, meaning everything aside from Allāh, by the very fact of His creating them, His preparing for them all that they need and His favouring them with great blessings which if removed would also remove any possibility of the creation surviving. Therefore every blessing they possess is from Him, Exalted is He.

His sustaining His creation is of two types: General and Specific. As for the general, it is His creating the creation, granting them provisions and guiding them to that which would benefit them in order to have them survive in this world. As for the specific, it is His sustaining His friends with faith and making them conform to it, perfecting and completing it for them, repressing all that

¹⁷ Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 1 #1

¹⁸ al-Qurtubī, vol. 1, pg. 96; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 45; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 21; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 105

¹⁹ as-Sa'dī, pg. 16

would make them turn away from it, bridling any hindering factors that may be set up between them and Him, and safe-guarding them from all evil. It is possible that the reason behind the fact that most of the supplications made by the Prophets employed the word 'Lord' was due to it carrying this meaning, for indeed all of the things they desired through their supplications fell under His Specific Lordship.²⁰

4.5 The meaning of '*Alamin*'

There is some difference concerning the meaning of the word '*ālamīn*'. It is the plural of '*ālam*' which is itself a plural - it has no singular. al-Fara'i and Abū 'Ubaydah said,

al-ālam is a term referring to anything that possesses an intellect and these fall into four categories: Mankind, Jinn, Angels and Satans. The term '*ālam*' does not refer to the animal kingdom because this plural refers to those who possess an intellect specifically.

It is also said that it refers to every race or species of creation and to each generation of that race as stated by Qatādah and at-Tabārī. Therefore mankind is an '*ālam*' and likewise every individual race amongst them would be an '*ālam*' also, just as each generation of that race would be an '*ālam*'. Similarly the Jinn are an '*ālam*' etc..

Some of the scholars stated that *al-ālam* is derived from *al-'allāmah* or sign because the existence of the world is a sign, without doubt, of the existence of its Creator who is described with perfect and magnificent Attributes. Allāh, Exalted is He said,

²⁰ as-Sa'dī, pg. 22

إِنَّ فِي
خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَآخْرِيفِ الْلَّيلِ وَالنَّهارِ لَذِكْرٍ
لِأُولَئِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩﴾

«Indeed in the creation of the heavens and the earth
and the change of the night and day are signs (*āyāt*)
for the people of understanding»

[*Āli 'Imrān* (3): 190]

and in the language *āyah* means '*allāmah*'.²¹

However in another place in the Qur'ān, Allāh Himself has indicated its meaning,

فَالْفِرْعَوْنُ وَمَارِبُ الْعَالَمِينَ
فَالرَّبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَنْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ مُوقِنٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

«Pharaoh said: and what is the Lord of the '*ālamīn*?
He (Moses) said: the Lord of the heavens and the
earth and what is between them»

[*ash-Shu'arā* (26): 23-24]

and therefore the most correct view is that it refers to all that is
in existence besides Allāh.²²

Qatādah said,

al-'ālamīn is the plural of '*ālam* and it refers to everything

²¹ al-Baghawi, vol. 1, pg. 52; Abū Hayyān, vol. 1, pg. 130; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 21;
ash-Shanqītī, vol. 1, pg. 31

²² ibn 'Atīyyah, vol. 1, pg. 67; al-Qurtubī, vol. 1, pg. 97; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 46; al-Khāzin, vol. 1, pg. 15

in existence besides Allāh.

Ibn ‘Abbās (*radīj Allāhu ‘anhu mā*) said in explanation to this verse of *al-Fatiḥah*,

All praise and thanks are due to Allāh, to whom belongs the creation in its entirety, the heavens and the earth and whosoever is in them and whatsoever is between them - that which is known and unknown.²³

4.6 Summary

When one says, "*All praise and thanks are due to Allāh*" he is affirming that Allāh deserves to be praised simply because He is Allāh, due to His perfection and beautiful Names and Attributes. When one says, "*Lord of the worlds*" he is affirming that Allāh also deserves to be praised for His nurturing and sustaining us, for the many blessings He has granted us, and His governance of our affairs. By mentioning "*worlds*" the servant is drawn to ponder the fact that the existence of these worlds prove without doubt the existence of the Creator.²⁴ Furthermore the servant realises that this religion of Islām is a universal religion and not restricted to one race or nation for Allāh is the "*Lord of the worlds*". Moreover we learn that He Alone is the Creator and that all affairs are under His disposition, just as are all blessings. He is completely Self-Sufficient and the creation is in total need of Him Alone for everything, this then engenders awe and dread of Him, Glorious is He.

Another essential point that we learn from this verse, essential to our understanding of *Tawḥid*, is that the Lord, Blessed and Ex-

²³ at-Tabārī, vol. 1, pg. 92; as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 36

²⁴ al-Baqā’ī, vol. 1, pg. 14

4.6 Summary

altered is He, is distinct from His creation and not everywhere.²⁵

This is an issue which the *Salaf* of this nation were unanimously agreed upon and is clearly proven by a multitude of texts from the Book and Sunnah.

²⁵ ibn al-Qayyim, *Madarij as-Salikin*, vol. 1, pg. 84

CHAPTER V

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

The All-Merciful (*ar-Rahmān*), The Most Merciful (*ar-Rahīm*)

These are two descriptions of Allāh, Exalted is He, and two of the Names from amongst His Beautiful Names derived from *ar-rahma* (mercy) in a way to express intense meanings.

5.1 The meaning of *ar-Rahmān* and *ar-Rahīm*

These two names express different aspects of mercy: *ar-Rahmān* being upon the *wazn* of *fa'lān* indicates the predominance of that quality as well as its being replete. *ar-Rahīm* being upon the *wazn* of *fa'il* indicates the repetitiveness of that quality as well as its occurrence on the intended object. It is for this reason that some scholars said that *ar-Rahmān* was a Name pointing to the Attribute of the Essence of Allāh and *ar-Rahīm* was a Name pointing to the Attribute of Deed.

Ibn al-Qayyim said,

'*al-Rahmān* points to an Attribute that is existent in Him, Transcendent is He, and *al-Rahīm* points to its interaction with the recipient of mercy. If you wish to understand this, ponder carefully His saying,

وَكَانَ أَلْرَحِيمُ مِنَ الْمُرْحِيمِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

«He is Most Merciful to the believers.»¹

الرَّحِيمُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ أَسْتَوَى ﴿٤٧﴾

«The All-Merciful rose over the Throne.»²

for not once is it mentioned that he is *Rahmān* with them. This proves that *ar-Rahmān* refers to one who is described with mercy whereas *ar-Rahīm* is One who shows mercy.³

Others said that *ar-Rahmān* was more intense than *ar-Rahīm* in meaning.⁴ *ar-Rahmān* is the one endowed with Mercy that extends to all of the creations in this world and to the believers in the Hereafter. *ar-Rahīm* on the other hand is the One endowed with Mercy that extends to only the believers on the Day of Judgement - this being the understanding of the majority of the scholars. The narration reported from 'Isā, as mentioned by ibn Kathīr and others, also indicates this - that he (upon him and our Prophet be peace and blessings) said,

ar-Rahmān: the One who shows mercy in this world and

¹ *al-Abqāb* (33): 43

² *Tā Hā* (20): 5

³ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Bada'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pg. 24

⁴ Abū Hayyān, vol. 1, pg. 128

the Hereafter. *ar-Rahmān*, the One who shows mercy in the Hereafter.⁵

Allāh the Exalted also points to what we have mentioned when He said,

نَعَّاصَتَوْيَ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ الرَّحْمَنُ

«Then He rose over the Throne, *ar-Rahmān*»

[*al-Furqān* (25): 59]

الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ أَسْتَوْيَ

«*ar-Rahmān* rose over the Throne»

[*Tā Hā* (20): 5]

So he mentioned the *istawā* (Rising over the Throne) with His Name, *ar-Rahmān*, so as to embrace the whole of His creation with his mercy as was stated by ibn Kathīr. Likewise is His saying,

أَوْلَئِرْ وَإِلَى الظَّبَرِ فَقَهْرَ صَفَنَتِ وَقَيْضَنَ مَا
يُمْسِكُهُ إِلَّا الْرَّحْمَنُ إِنَّهُ يَكُلُّ شَقَرَ وَصَبَرَ

«Do they not see the birds above them, spreading out their wings and folding them in? None upholds them except *ar-Rahmān*»

[*al-Mulk* (67): 19]

meaning: from his mercy to His creation is his kindness to the birds and His holding them in the sky while they are spreading out their wings and folding them in. From the clearest evidences pertaining to this is His saying,

⁵ at-Tabārī, vol. 1, pg. 84

الْرَّحْمَنُ ۝ عَلِمَ الْقُرْبَانَ ۝ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَنَ ۝
 عَلِمَ الْبَيَانَ ۝ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَرْئُ مُعْتَبَانَ ۝ وَالنَّجْمُ
 وَالشَّجَرُ سَجَدَاَنَ ۝ وَالسَّمَاءُ رَفَعَهَا وَضَعَمَ الْمِيزَانَ
 أَلَا تَنْظَفُوا فِي الْبَيَانِ ۝ وَأَفْيَوْا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ
 وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ۝ وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا الْأَنْوَارُ ۝
 فِيهَا نِكَّةٌ ۝ وَالنَّحْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكَادِ ۝ وَالْحَبَّذُ دُولُ الْمُصْفِ
 وَالرَّحْمَانُ ۝ يَنْهَا إِلَيْهِ رَبِّكُمْ كَذِبَانَ ۝

«*ar-Rahmān*. He taught the Qur'ān... so which of the favours of your Lord will you two deny?»

[*ar-Rahmān* (55): 1-13]

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

وَكَانَ إِلَيْهِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ رَحِيمًا ۝

«...and He is Ever Most Merciful (*rahīm*) to the believers»

[*al-Abzāb* (33): 43]

and hence particularised His name *ar-Rahīm* to them. So if it asked: 'how is it possible to reconcile what you have thusfar established with his ۝ saying in the supplication,

"The *Rahmān* of the world and the Hereafter and the *Rahīm* of them"?"⁶

⁶ Reported by al-Hākim #1898, on the authority of 'Āishah and he declared it *ṣahīh*. However adh-Dhababī criticised this by saying, 'al-Hakam, its narrator, is not trustworthy and precise.' as-Suyūtī, vol. 1, pg. 29, said the isnād was *da'if* and al-Mundhiri,

The obvious reply - and Allāh knows best - is that *ar-Rahīm* is specific to the believers as we have mentioned, but it is not specified to them in the Hereafter alone, rather His Mercy to them is included in this world as well. So the meaning of 'the *Rahīm* of them' would be 'His mercy to the believers in them'. The evidence that He is *Rahīm* to the believers in this world as well as the Hereafter is that this is the literal meaning of His, the Exalted's saying,

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصْلِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا لَتِحْكُمُ
مِنَ الظُّلْمِ إِلَّا لَنُورٌ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا ﴿٤٧﴾

«He is the One who sends His blessings (*talāh*) upon you, and His Angels so as to lead you out of the darkness to the light, and He is ever Most-Merciful (*rahīm*) to the believers»

[al-Ahzāb (33): 43]

because His *salāh* upon them, the *salāh* of His Angels and His leading them out of the darkness to the light is mercy to them in this world, even though it be the cause for mercy in the Hereafter as well. Similar to this in meaning is His saying,

لَقَدْ نَأَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَى
الثَّقِيلِ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ أَتَبْعَثُوهُ فِي
سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ أَعْدَمِ مَا كَادَ يَرِيقُ قُلُوبُ فَرِيقٍ
مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ نَأَبَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّهُ يَوْمَ زُهْدٍ وَّرَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٦﴾

«Allāh has forgiven the Prophet, the Muhājirūn and

=

Targhib wat Tarhib, vol. 2, pg. 616, said about this isnād, 'al-Hakam is abandoned, accused.' It is also recorded on the authority of 'Abdur-Rahmān ibn Sābiṭ by ibn Abī Shaybah as per *as-Suyū̄i*, vol. 1, pg. 30

the Anṣār who followed him in the time of distress after the hearts of a group of them had nearly deviated [from the Right Path], but He accepted their repentance. Certainly He is Full of Kindness to them, Most Merciful (rahīm)»

[*at-Tawbah* (9): 117]

for the mercy mentioned here is in connection to the event that befell the Prophet, the Muḥājirūn and the Anṣār; moreover His forgiving them was mercy in this world even though it be the cause for mercy in the Hereafter as well. The knowledge of what is correct lies with Allāh.⁷

The Name, *ar-Rabmān*, is one of the names unique to Allāh and it is not permissible to name any other with it. It is for this reason that Allāh, Exalted is He says,

قُلْ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّبَّ مَنِ اتَّابَ مَا نَذَرَ فَلَمْ يُؤْكِلْ
الْأَسْمَاءُ الْمُشْفَقَةُ

«Say, ‘Call on Allāh or call on the All-Merciful, whichever you call upon, the Most Beautiful Names are His.’»

[*al-Isrā'* (17): 110]

وَنَّا مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُّسُلِنَا
أَجْعَلْنَا مِنْ دُونِ الْرَّحْمَنِ إِلَهَ يُعْبَدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

«Ask those We sent before you as Our Messengers: Have We ever designated any gods to be worshipped besides the All-Merciful?»

⁷ The above discussion is taken from *ash-Shanqītī*, vol. 1, pp. 31-32. See also *ibn Kathīr*, vol. 1, pp. 41-42; *ash-Shawkānī*, vol. 1, pg. 18

[*az-Zukhruf* (43): 45]¹⁰

5.2 The placing of this verse in the *Sūrah*

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allāh have mercy upon him, said,

'His Name, Allāh, shows that he is taken as God and the object of worship; the creation take Him as their God by way of love, veneration, and submission; and they resort to Him to fulfil their needs and at times of calamity. This is what necessarily leads on from the perfection of His Lordship and mercy which in turn include the perfection of sovereignty and praise. His godship, lordship, mercy, and sovereignty necessarily lead on from all His Attributes of perfection since it is impossible to affirm this for one who is not living, hearing, seeing, powerful, speaking, doing as he pleases, and wise in his words and deeds. Therefore the Attributes of Majesty and Beauty relate to His Name, Allāh; and the Attributes of deed, power, singularity in bring harm and benefit, granting and withholding, implementing His will, and regulating the affairs of creation relate to His Name, *al-Rabb* (the Lord); and the Attributes of beneficence, generosity, granting gifts, tenderness, favouring, compassion, and kindness all relate to His Name, *al-Rahmān*.'¹¹

In Allāh's mentioning His Names, *ar-Rahmān* and *ar-Rahim*, after mentioning "*Lord of the worlds*" lies an example of encouragement following admonition such that the servant combines in himself a sense of dread as well as hope.¹² Examples of this method are

¹⁰ al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 75; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 42

¹¹ ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij al-Salikin*, vol. 1, pg. 18

¹² al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 98; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 47; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 21

abundant in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. For example His sayings,

يَقِنْ عَبْدَهُ أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٩﴾ وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي
هُوَ الْمَنَاثِ الْأَلِيمُ

«Inform My servants that it is I Who is the Forgiving, the Merciful and that it is My punishment that is the painful torment»

[*al-Hijr* (15): 49-50]

غَافِرُ الذَّنْبِ وَقَاهِيلُ التَّوْبَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الْعَطْوَلِ

«The forgiver of sin, acceptor of repentance, severe in punishment, owner of Abundance»

[*Ghāfir* (40): 3]

Abū Hurayrah (*radī Allāhu 'anhu*) reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

If the believers knew of the punishment of Allāh, none would hope to attain His Paradisc. If the disbelievers knew the full extent of the Mercy of Allāh, none would despair of entering His Mercy.¹³

Moreover, after stating that Allāh is the Lord of the worlds, that He is their sustainer and nurturer, this verse proceeds to show that this sustaining and nurturing is not done because Allāh is in need of creation, but because of His mercy. Hence His Lordship is one of mercy and justice and not one of subjugation and oppression; he does not oppress his servants in the slightest, every punishment from Him arises from pure justice and every blessing arises from pure grace. Through believing that Allāh is All-Merciful, the serv-

¹³ Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 4, pg. 1438 #6636

ant is encouraged to praise Allāh more.

This verse also serves to remind us that just as Allāh has nurtured and sustained us in the best of ways, granting us blessings after blessings, so too should we nurture and cultivate ourselves and those who are placed in our care, upon mercy and justice, using those self-same blessings Allāh has bestowed us. Just as Allāh is merciful, so too should we be merciful in nature and in deed,

ar-Rābīmān shows mercy to the merciful. Have mercy on those who are on earth and the One who is above the heaven will have mercy on you.¹⁴

Whoever is merciful, even when it comes to slaughtering a bird, Allāh will show him mercy on the Day of Judgment.^{15,16}

¹⁴ Abū Dāwūd #4941, at-Tirmidhī #1924, and Aḥmad #6494 on the authority of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr. at-Tirmidhī said it was hasan saḥīḥ and al-Albānī #3522, said it was saḥīḥ.

Similar ḥādīth are recorded on the authority of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr by Aḥmad #6541, 7041; Abū Hurayrah by Bukhārī #5997; Jarīr ibn ‘Abdullāh by Bukhārī #7376; Abū Sa’id by Aḥmad, vol. 3, pg. 40; Jābir by ibn Abī Shaybah, vol. 8, pg. 529; ibn ‘Umar by al-Bazzār #1952; Imrān ibn Husayn by al-Bazzār #1953; ibn Mas’ūd by at-Tabarānī, *al-Kabir* #10277; and al-Ash’ath ibn Qays by at-Tabarānī, *al-Awsat*.

¹⁵ Bukhārī, *Adab al-Mufrad* #381. al-Haythamī, *Majma‘ az-Zawā’id*, vol. 4, pg. 33 said its narrators were trustworthy and precise and al-Albānī, *as-Saḥīḥah* #27 declared the isnād hasan.

¹⁶ al-Baqā’ī, vol. 1, pg. 14; Rāshīd Ridā, vol. 1, pp. 46-48

5.3 The repetition of *ar-Rahmān* and *ar-Rahīm*

Those who are of the opinion that, "With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful" is the first verse of *al-Fātiḥah* proceed to explain why it is that these two Names are repeated once again in the *Sūrah*.¹⁷ Some said that the reason behind this was to emphasise the mercy of Allāh, but also pointed out that the very next verse tells us that we should not allow ourselves to be deceived into laxity and procrastination because Allāh is also the Master of the Day of Judgment.¹⁸ In this emphasis of the mercy of Allāh lies a clear refutation of those, mainly amongst the Christians, who say that the Lord of the Muslims is an angry God and One who takes swift vengeance, who further say that religion of Islām is one of fear and hatred.¹⁹

Others said that in the first mention of Allāh's mercy, the recipients of that mercy were not mentioned, hence the verse was repeated a second time to show who receives this mercy, "*the worlds*"²⁰ The reason why the mercy of Allāh is mentioned at the beginning of the *Sūrāhs* of the Qur'ān is to show us that it is by the mercy and grace of Allāh that He has sent down to us this revelation, just as He says concerning the recipient of the revelation (ﷺ),

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِلنَّاسِ

«We have not sent you except as a mercy to the
worlds»

¹⁷ al-Kirmānī, pg. 111

¹⁸ al-Kirmānī, pg. 111; al-Khāzin, vol. 1, pg. 16; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 110

¹⁹ Rāshīd Rīdā, vol. 1, pg. 67

²⁰ al-Kirmānī, pg. 110; al-Faīrozabādī, vol. 1, pg. 130

[*al-Anbyā'* (21): 107]

and to further show that he (ﷺ) has nothing to gain through the revelation and that his only duty is to convey.²¹

²¹ Rashīd Ridā, vol. 1, pp. 47, 66-67, who also mentions that the only chapter not to commence with the *basm Allah is at-Tawbah*. The reason for this is that it was revealed with the sword and to unveil the machinations and thoughts of the hypocrites, so with respect to those it was sent down to unveil, it is more of a trial and tribulation than it is a mercy.

CHAPTER VI

مَلِكٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ﴿١﴾

Master of the Day of Judgement

6.1 The meaning of *Malik*

The reciters have two different ways of reciting the first word of this verse, both of which have been reported via continuous (*mutawātir*) transmission from the Prophet (ﷺ) as well as Abū Bakr and 'Umar:¹

1. Reciting it as *Malik*, or the King.

So the meaning of the verse would be that on that Day, kingship would belong to Allāh Alone and not to any of the creation who before then used to be kings on earth, vying with each other for power and dominion, exulting in what they had, pompously boasting about their grandeur and trying their best to outdo their competitors. However on that day they will come to know with certainty that in reality they are powerless, helpless and vulnerable and

¹ as mentioned by at-Tirmidhī; see also ibn 'Anīyyah, vol. 1, pg. 69 and as-Suyūtī, vol. 1, pg. 38

that grandeur, power and authority belongs, in its entirety, to Allāh Alone. Allāh, Exalted is He says,

يَوْمَ هُمْ بِرُوحٍ لَا يَعْقِنُ
عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَفَاعَةٌ لِمَنِ الْمَلَكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَحْدَةُ الْقَهَّارُ ⑯

«That Day when they will all come out, nothing of them will be hidden from Allāh. Whose is the kingdom this Day? It belongs to Allāh, the One, the Irresistible!»

[*Ghafir* (40): 16]

2. Reciting it as *Mālik*, or the Owner.

So the meaning of the verse would be that on that Day, everything would belong to Him and no one else. No one will be able to voice an opinion or enforce a ruling as they used to do on this world. Allāh says,

يَوْمَ قُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ سَقَالُوا لَهُ تَكْلِمُونَ
لَا مَنْ أَذْنَنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ⑰

«That Day on which the Spirit and the Angels will stand forth in rows, none shall speak except he whom the All-Merciful allows and he will speak only that which is correct and true»

[*an-Naba'a* (78): 38]

يَوْمَ يُذْبَحُونَ الدَّاعِيَ
لَا يَعْنِجُ لَهُ وَخَسَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ إِلَرْبَمْنَ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَاهَمْسَا

«...All voices will be humbled before the All-Merciful and nothing shall you hear but the low sound of

their footsteps»

[*Tā Hā* (20): 108]

وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَرَضَنَ

«They cannot intercede except for one with whom He is pleased»

[*al-Anbiyā'* (21): 28]

Both recitations, of course, carry sound and good meanings. However it is possible to argue, as at-Tabarī does, that the first reading has the most comprehensive meaning as it is not possible to have sovereignty and kingship without possession, whereas there can be ownership without kingship. Similarly it is the king who will enjoin laws upon the owner as to how he should regulate his possessions. However ash-Shawkānī and ibn ‘Aṭiyyah argue that both descriptions carry a meaning that is not found in the other. The *mālik* of property is able to dispose of his property as he wills whereas the *malik* will only be able to dispose of the *mālik*'s property in a limited fashion. The *malik* is able to command the *mālik* to dispose of his property in a particular way that promotes the benefit of his kingdom, but the *mālik* is not able to command another *mālik* with the same.²

Allāh also says,

وَلَهُ الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَ يُنَشَّعُ فِي الْأَصْوَرِ

«His will be the kingdom on the Day that the trumpet is blown»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 73]

If it is asked: why did Allāh specify his kingship or ownership to the Last Day when it is known that these qualities always have and

² at-Tabarī, vol. 1, pp. 95-96; ibn ‘Aṭiyyah, vol. 1, pg. 69; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 47; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 22

always will apply to Him?

The answer lies in the fact that on that Day the completeness and perfection of His kingship, justice and wisdom, just as it will become entirely clear that the sovereignty of the creation has been severed to the extent that the kings, ministers, slaves, and free-born will all stand on par with each other; all of them yielding to His greatness, rendered in complete submission to His magnificence, expectant of His recompense, hoping for His reward and fearing His punishment. His kingship has been emphasised by mentioning it in this context, otherwise He indeed is master of the Day of Judgment and all other days.³

It is important to note that there is no true Owner besides Allāh,

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَخْلُقُ مَا شَاءَ كَه

«To Allāh belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He creates what He wills.»

[*ash-Shūrā* (42): 49]

فُلْ نَلَوْ السَّفَنَعَةُ جَوِيعَالَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ شَرَعَ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَمُونَ ١٤

«...To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him you will be returned»

[*az-Zumar* (39): 44]

بَشَرَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ١٥

«Blessed is He in whose hand is the Kingdom! He

³ al-Bayḍāwī, vol. 1, pg. 59; al-Qurtubī, vol. 1, pg. 100; al-Khāzin, vol. 1, pg. 16; as-Sa'dī

has power over all things»

[*al-Mulk* (67): 1]

لَهُ مُلْكٌ
أَنْشَئَنَا بِوَالْأَرْضِ مُطْمِنٍّ - وَيُحْيِيٌّ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١﴾

«The kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. He gives life and causes to die, and He has power over all things.»

[*al-Hadid* (57): 2]

Allāh adduced the absence of ownership of those worshipped besides Him as proof that they did not deserve worship,

وَبَعْدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ رِزْقًا إِنَّ الْمُسْنَدَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ شَيْءٌ وَلَا يَسْتَطِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾

«...and worship, instead of Allāh, things that have no control over their provision from the heavens or earth in any way, and are themselves completely impotent.»

[*an-Nahl* (16): 73]

فَلَمَّا تَبَدَّلُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا
يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَاللَّهُ هُوَ أَسْمَعُ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣﴾

«Say: Do you worship, besides Allāh, something which has no power to harm or help you when Allāh is All-Hearing, the All-Knowing?»

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 76]

فَلِمَّا دُعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمُتُم مِّنْ دُونِ
 اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَفٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي
 الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَمْ يَمْرِغُ فِيهَا مِنْ شَرِيكٍ وَمَا لَمْ يَمْنَعْهُمْ مِّنْ طَهِيرٍ ﴿١٦﴾

«Say: call on those you make claims for besides Allāh. They have no power over even the smallest particle either in the heavens or in the earth. They have no share in them and He has no need of their support.»

[*Saba'* (34): 22]

ذَلِكُمْ أَنَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَالَّذِينَ
 تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ، مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْ قُطْمَارٍ ﴿١٧﴾

«That is Allāh, your Lord. The Kingdom is His. Those you call on besides Him have no power over even the smallest speck.»

[*Fatir* (35): 13]

There is also no true King besides Allāh, and therefore there is none who deserves absolute obedience save Allāh, and this obedience comes before the obedience of any other.

As for describing someone as *malik* or *mālik* then this is permissible for one who fulfils the requirements of the description, by way of metaphor.⁴ In this sense is His saying,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَائِلَوْتَ مَلِكًا

⁴ al-Qurtubī, vol. 1, pg. 99; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 48; al-Khāzin, vol. 1, pg. 16

«Indeed Allāh has sent you Saul as a king»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 247]

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَنْقُومُوا إِذْ كُرُوا
يَنْقَسِمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلْتُ فِيهِمْ أَنِيَّةً وَجَعَلْتُكُمْ مُلُوكًا

«Moses said to his people: O my people! Remember the favour of Allāh upon you when He appointed amongst you prophets and made you kings»

[*al-Mâ'idah* (5): 20]

Yet, we should beware of letting our ownership fool us into vain-glory and boasting as was the case of Pharaoh,

وَنَادَى فَرْعَوْنٌ فِي قَوْمِهِ
قَالَ يَنْقُومُ الَّذِي لِي مُلْكٌ وَضَرَرَ وَهَذِهِ الْأَنْهَرُ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِي أَفَلَا يَبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ أَمْ أَنْأَيْتُهُمْ مِنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ مِنْهُمْ
وَلَا يَكُونُونَ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

«Pharaoh called to his people saying, 'My people, does the kingdom of Egypt not belong to me? Do not all these rivers flow under my control? Do you not see? Am I not better than this man who is contemptible and can scarcely make anything clear?'»

[*az-Zukhruf* (43): 51-52]

فَعَشَرَ فَنَادَى ﴿١﴾ فَقَالَ آتَانِيَّكُمُ الْأَعْلَى

«But then he rallied and called out, saying, 'I am your Lord Most High!'»

[*an-Nâzi'ât* (79): 23-24]

And Allāh made him an example in history of His punishment to

such people,

فَاسْتَحْفَفَ قَوْمًا
فَأَطَاعُوهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَلَمَّا مَاءَ اسْقُونَا
أَنْقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَبْعَدْنَا مِنْهُمْ
سَلَفَا وَمِثْلًا لِلآخرِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾

«In this way he swayed his people and they succumbed to him; they were a deviant people. Then when they had provoked Our wrath, We took revenge on them and drowned every one of them. We made them a thing of the past and an example for later people.»

[az-Zukhruf (43): 54-56]

It is unlawful to call anyone by the name of *Malik al-Amlāk*. Bukhārī and Muslim report on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

On the Day of Resurrection Allāh will hold the earth and fold the heaven with His right hand. Then He will say, "I am the King, where are the kings [who reigned] on the earth?"⁵

Bukhārī also reports on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

Indeed the most disloyal and treacherous name in the sight of Allāh is that of a person named the king of kings (*maliku-l-amlāk*).

⁵ Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 9, pg. 355 #479; Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 4, pg. 1462 #6703

Muslim adds in his report,

For there is no Mālik except for Allāh, the Mighty and Magnificent.⁶

Aḥmad reports that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

The person towards whom Allāh displays the most anger, and the most despicable on the Day of Resurrection is one who was named king of kings (*maliku-l-amlāk*) for there is no Malik except for Allāh.⁷

al-Qurṭubī and ash-Shawkānī both stated that with respect to Allāh, *Malik* points to an Attribute of the Essence whereas *Mālik* points to an Attribute of Action.

⁶ Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 8, pg. 144 #224, 225; Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 3, pg. 1171 #5339

⁷ Aḥmad #7329, 8176, 10384 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah. al-Albānī, *as-Sahihah*#915 said it was sahīh

6.2 Meaning of the word *yawm*

The word *yawm* refers to a period of time. In common usage it refers to the time between the onset of dawn and sunset. It can also refer to a particular portion of time or hour in a day as in His saying,

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِيْنَكُمْ وَأَعْمَلْتُ
عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَةً وَرَضِيَتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ وَبِئْنَا

«This day have I perfected your religion for you,
completed my favour upon you and chosen for you
Islam as your religion»

[*al-Mâ'idah* (5): 3]

It can also refer to periods of time greater than one day as in His sayings,

يَدْبِرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاوَاتِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ
إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مَّا تَعْدُونَ ﴿١﴾

«He arranges each matter from the heaven to the earth; then it will ascend to Him in a Day the extent of which is a thousand years of those which you count»

[*al-Sajdah* (32): 5]

تَرْجُمُ الْمَلائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي
يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةً ﴿١﴾

«The Angels and the Spirit ascend to Him during a day the extent of which is fifty thousand years»

[*al-Mâ'arij* (70): 4]⁸

⁸ Qurṭubî, vol. 1, pg. 100

6.3 Meaning of the word *Din*

The word *din* here means reckoning or recompense and it is in this sense that the word is employed in His saying,

يَوْمَ يُبَوَّلُونَ مِمَّا دَيَّنُوكُمُ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِالْحَقِيقَةِ

«On that Day Allāh will pay them their *din* in truth»

[*an-Nūr* (24): 25]

meaning: the recompense of their actions with complete justice. Allāh also said,

أَنَّا مِنَّا وَكَانُوا كُفَّارًا وَأَعْلَمُمَا أَنَّا الْمَدِينُونَ ﴿٤﴾

«Then when we have died and become dust and bones, we will indeed be recompensed?»

[*as-Sāffāt* (37): 53]⁹

Ibn 'Abbās said in explanation of the words *yawmi-d-din*,

The Day on which the creations are judged - the Day of Resurrection. He will recompense them for their actions; if they were good then it will be good, if they were bad then it will be bad except for that which He forgives for indeed the only order [on that Day] will be His order,

أَلَا لِلَّهِ الْفُلُقُ وَالْأَمْرُ بِسَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

«Unquestionably to Him belongs the creation and the Command»

[*al-'A'raf* (7): 54]¹⁰

⁹ ibn 'Atīyyah, vol. 1, pg. 71; Qurtubī, vol. 1, pg. 100; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 48, ash-Shanqītī, vol. 1, pg. 32

¹⁰ at-Tabarī, vol. 1, pg. 98

There is no further explanation in this verse of *al-Fatiha* as to what the Day of *Din* is, but this is explained in His saying,

وَمَا أَدْرِيكَ مَا يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ ۚ ۗ ثُمَّ مَا أَدْرِيكَ مَا يَوْمُ الْذِي هُنَّ عَلَىٰ مُّهَاجِرُونَ ۚ ۗ
يَوْمٌ لَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ ۝

«And what will make you comprehend what the Day of *Din* is? Again what will make you comprehend what the Day of *Din* is? It is the Day when no person shall have power [to do] anything for another. The command that Day will be Allāh's Alone»

[*al-Insitār* (82): 17-19]¹¹

6.4 The place of this verse in the *Sūrah*

One can be a lord, and merciful, yet not be an owner or king, lordship is not perfected except with these two matters and hence this verse shows us that the Lordship of Allāh is complete and perfect.¹² After having mentioned that all praise is due to Allāh, Allāh mentions that He is also the Lord, the Merciful and the Master. Hence He is praised for being Allāh, praised in His Lordship, praised for His mercy and praised for His sovereignty.¹³ Moreover all the Names of Allāh revolve around the meanings contained in the Names mentioned in this chapter.¹⁴

Ibn al-Qayyim said,

¹¹ *ash-Shanqītī*, vol. 1, pg. 32

¹² *al-Baqā'i*, vol. 1, pg. 14

¹³ *an-Nasafī*, vol. 1, pg. 16; *ibn al-Qayyim*, pg. 35

¹⁴ *ibn al-Qayyim*, pg. 25

'So in this chapter Five Names of Allāh have been mentioned: Allāh which in fact indicates all His Names and Attributes, and deals with His beauty, *jamā'ī*, and magnificence, *jalā'ī*; *ar-Rabb* which deals with His attributes of deed, His omnipotence, His being Alone in bringing harm and benefit, His granting and preventing, and His will being implemented; *ar-Rahmān* and *ar-Rahim* which deal with His beneficence, munificence, His kindness, His gentleness, and His doing good; and *al-Malik* which deals with His justice, His raising and lowering, His granting and withholding, His honouring and humiliating, and His ruling, judging and recompensing.'¹⁵

In this verse following the verse concerning the mercy of Allāh lies a reminder that Allāh is also the Judge. It establishes the existence of the Resurrection and final judgment. Therefore not only should we love Him for His nourishing and sustaining us and for His compassion and mercy to us, but we should also hold Him in awe knowing that our ultimate happiness or misery rests with Him Alone.¹⁶ Ibn al-Jawzī said,

It is reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "When Allāh, Blessed and Exalted is He, will gather the first and last people, a caller will proclaim, 'This is the Day of Judgment, this is the Day of Decision that you used to deny'"

O indigent one! Look to your self and examine it; O weak of faith and certainty! O one who claims to be a believer yet works the deeds of the deniers, the dissenters, those who have abandoned the Sunnah of the Master of the Messengers and Seal of the Prophets! What has

¹⁵ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Salikin*, vol. 1, pg. 34, summarised

¹⁶ Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 139

led you to be considered one of the liars in the sight of Allāh? Were you to fear the punishment of the Day of Judgment, you would surely have acted upon the Clear Qur'ān; were you one of the believers, you surely would have obeyed the Lord of the first and last. Ask your Lord to relieve you from your affliction of the disease of sin and wrench yourself away from all vile and blame-worthy deeds.¹⁷

We are also given consolation that although on the Day of Judgment, Allāh will be angry as He has never been before, the fact that Allāh mentioned His mercy first in the previous verse indicates to us, as proven by the authentic ḥadīth, that His mercy precedes His wrath.¹⁸

¹⁷ ibn al-Jawzi, pg. 71

¹⁸ al-Baqā'i, vol. 1, pg. 13; al-Fairozabādi, vol. 1, pg. 130

CHAPTER VII

إِلَّاكَ تَعْبُدُ

You Alone we worship

After having praised Allāh, the servant proceeds to acknowledge his servitude and dire need of his Lord, Exalted is He.

7.1 The verse exemplifies the meaning of *Tawhid*

This verse points to the actualisation of the meaning of *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* (there is none worthy of worship except for Allāh) for its meaning is comprised of two matters: negation and affirmation. The negation aspect, contained in the words *lā ilāha*, means to relinquish every single object of worship besides Allāh in all actions of worship. The affirmation aspect, contained in the words *illā Allāh*, means to single out the Lord of the heavens and the earth Alone for all matters of worship in the way that has been legislated by the *Shari'ah*.

The negation in *lā ilāha illā Allāh* is shown by placing the object of worship first in the verse such that it reads "**You Alone...**" It is established in the rules of the Arabic language that placing the object first in a sentence is one of the ways of confining the meaning

of the verb to the object alone.

The affirmation part of the *kalima* is shown in His saying, "*we worship*".

Allāh, Exalted is He, has explained this meaning, which is alluded to here, in detail elsewhere,

يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَعْبُدُ وَأَرِبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقْتُمْ

«O Mankind! Worship your Lord who created you»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 21]

expounding the affirmation aspect with his words, "*worship your Lord*" and the negation aspect at the end of this noble verse with His words,

فَلَا تَنْعَلِّمُوا إِلَهًا دَوْلَةٍ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢﴾

«So do not set up rivals with Allāh while you know»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 22]

He, Exalted is He, also says,

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنْ يَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
وَاجْتَنِبُوا الظَّلْفَوْتَ

«We have indeed sent a Messenger to every people
saying: worship Allāh and leave all that is worshipped
besides Him»

[*an-Nahl* (16): 36]

expounding the affirmation with His words, "*worship Allāh*" and the negation with His words, "*and leave all that is worshipped besides Allāh*."

فَمَن يَكْمُرُ بِالظَّلْعُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ
أَسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ

«And whosoever rejects all that is worshipped besides Allāh and believes in Allāh has held onto the most trustworthy handhold»

[al-Baqarah (2): 256]

expounding the negation with his words, “*whosoever rejects all that is worshipped besides Allāh*” and the affirmation with His words, “*and believes in Allāh*”.

وَلَذِقَ الْإِبْرَاهِيمُ لَأَيْدِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ
إِنَّمَا بَرَّهُ مَمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِي قَطَرَ فِي قَلْبِهِ سَيِّدُنَا
وَسَيِّدُ الْعَالَمِينَ

«And when Abraham said to his father and his people: Indeed I am free of what you worship except He who created me»

[az-Zukhruf (43): 26-27]

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِيَ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ
إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿٢٧﴾

«And We did not send a Messenger before you except that We revealed to him: there is none worthy of worship but Me, so worship Me»

[al-Anbiyā' (21): 25]

وَسَأَلَ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولِنَا
أَجَحَّلَنَا مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ مَا إِلَهٌ يُعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

«Ask those of Our Messengers whom We sent before you: did We ever appoint gods to be worshipped besides Allāh»

[az-Zukhruf' (43): 45]¹

7.2 The meaning of 'ibādah

Linguistically *'ibādah* is derived from *'abada* which means to be subservient and to subjugate. In Islām, the word *'ibādah*, or worship, is a comprehensive term referring to everything, inward and outward that Allāh loves and is pleased with.² Its pillars are love, hope, fear, submission and humility.

Worship can only be considered to be true worship when the way of performing it is taken from the Messenger (ﷺ), seeking thereby the face of Allāh only. These two conditions have to be present for the action to be considered worship and hence acceptable to Allāh³ and are proven by the ḥadīth recorded by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

Indeed actions are by intentions and every person shall have what he intended. So the one whose migration (*bijra*) was to Allāh and His Messenger, his migration was to Allāh and His Messenger; and the one whose migration was for some worldly gain, or a woman to marry, his migration was for that which he migrated to.⁴

¹ ash-Shanqīṭī, vol. 1, pp. 32-33

² ibn Taymiyyah, *al-'Ubadiyyah*, pg. 1

³ ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 73

⁴ Bukhārī Eng. Trans. 1, pg. 1 #1, Muslim Eng. Trans. 3, pg. 1056 #4692

and by the ḥadīth recorded by Muslim on the authority of 'Ā'ishah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

Whoever does an action that we have not commanded, it must be rejected.⁵

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۖ أَنَّمَا حَنَقَ
الْمَوْتُ وَالْحَيَاةُ ۖ لِيُبَرِّئَ مِنْ أَكْثَرِ أَحْسَنِ عَمَلٍ ۗ وَهُوَ الْمَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ ۚ

«...[He] Who created death and life that he may test which of you is best in action»

[*al-Mulk* (67): 2]

Fudayl bin 'Iyād commented on this by saying,

i.e. who is sincere in [his action] and correct in it. The action, if it is sincere but not correct, is not accepted; if it is correct but not sincere, it is not accepted. It is only accepted when it is both sincere and correct - it is sincere when it is done for the sake of Allāh and correct when it is done in compliance to the Sunnah.⁶

The proof for what Fudayl said lies in the verse,

إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مُّكْثُرٌ يُوحَى إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِنْهَكُمُ إِلَّا هُنَّ كَانُوا يَرْجُونَ
لِقَاءَنَا رَبِّهِ فَلَمَّا يَعْمَلُ عَمَلًا صَنَعْنَا لَهُ أَنْتَرِي لَمْ يَرَهُ أَنَّمَا

«...So whosoever hopes for the meeting with His

⁵ Muslim Eng. Trans. 3, pg. 931 #4266

⁶ ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-Ulūm wa-l-Hikam*, vol 1, pg. 29. See also al-Baghawī, vol. 8, pg. 176; al-Ālusi, vol. 29, pp. 8-10

**Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none
as a partner in the worship of His Lord»**

[*al-Kahf* (18): 110]

It is in this respect that Imām Aḥmad said that the foundation of the religion is built upon three abādīth:

- Indeed actions are by intention.
- Whoever introduces into this affair of ours that which is not part of it, it must be rejected.
- The lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear and between the two are affairs that are unclear.⁷

The whole religion is based upon doing the commanded, avoiding the prohibited and holding back from the doubtful matters; this is what the third ḥadīth proves. However two conditions have to be met to accomplish this:

1) outwardly the action must be done as taught by the Sunnah, this is proven by the second ḥadīth.

2) inwardly the action must be done seeking the Face of Allāh, this is proven by the first ḥadīth.⁸

⁷ Bukhārī #2501 and Muslim #1599 on the authority of an-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr.

The ḥadīth is also recorded on the authority of ibn 'Abbās by at-Tabarānī, *al-Kabir* #10824; ibn 'Umar by at-Tabarānī, *al-Awsat* #2889; Jābir by al-Khaṭīb, vol. 9, pp. 70; 'Ammār ibn Yāsir by Abū Ya'la #1653 all with ḥaṣīf asānīd.

⁸ ibn Rajab, vol. 1, pp. 29

7.3 Worship is the desired goal

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّةِ وَالْإِنْسَانَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

«I have not created jinn and mankind except that they may worship Me»

[*ad-Dhāriyāt* (51): 56]

وَلَقَدْ فَطَّلَ
أَنْكَ يَصْبِقُ صَدْرَكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ ﴿٧﴾ فَسَتَّحْ مُحَمَّدَ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ
مِّنَ السَّابِقِينَ ﴿٨﴾ وَأَعْبُدْ رَبِّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِinُ

«We know that your breast is constrained by what they say, so exalt [Allāh] with praise of your Lord and be of those who prostrate to Him and worship your Lord until the certainty comes to you»

[*al-Hijr* (15): 97-99]

meaning by certainty here, death, by consensus of the exegetes.⁹ This verse orders the Prophet (ﷺ) to continuously worship Allāh until his death, and also shows that through worship does one relieve himself of difficulty and despondency. The reason for this is when a person busies himself with worship, he is moving from interacting with creation to interacting with his Lord.¹⁰

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبِّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ

«O Mankind! Worship your Lord who created you...»

⁹ at-Tabarī, vol. 7, pg. 554; ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 94

¹⁰ ar-Rāzī, vol. 1, pg. 214

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 21]

All the Messengers, from the first to the last, called to the import of this verse,

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنْ يَأْبُدُوا إِلَهَهُ
وَاجْتَنِبُوا الظَّنَفُوتَ

«We have indeed sent a Messenger to every people saying: worship Allāh and leave all that is worshipped besides Him»

[*an-Nahl* (16): 36]

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِيَ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ
إِلَّا أَنَا أَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

«And We did not send a Messenger before you except that We revealed to him: there is none worthy of worship but Me, so worship Me»

[*al-Anbiya'* (21): 25]

It is with the attribute of servitude that Allāh describes the best of His creation, by way of honouring them,

لَنْ يَسْتَنِكُفَّ
الْمَسِيحُ أَنْ يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِلَّهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ لِلْقَرِيبِينَ

«The Messiah would never disdain to be a servant of Allāh nor would the Angels near to Him»

[*an-Nisā'* (4): 172]

بَارِكَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا
«Blessed be He who revealed the Criterion to His

servant»

[*al-Furqān* (25): 1]

وَأَنَّهُ لِمَا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ كَادُوا يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِدَانٌ ﴿١٦﴾

«When the servant of Allāh stands, calling on Him, they almost swarm all over him»

[*al-Jinn* (72): 19]

شَبَّحَنَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لِتَلَاءِ

«Glory be to Him who took His servant on a journey by night...»

[*al-Isrā'* (17), 1]

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ
هُوَنَا وَلَا يَخْطِئُهُمُ الْجَنَاحُ فَلَمَّا سَلَّمَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
يَسْتَوْكِلُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقَيْنَمًا ﴿٢٨﴾

«The servants of the All-Merciful are those who walk lightly on the earth and, who, when the ignorant speak to them, say, ‘Peace’; those who pass the night prostrating and standing before their Lord;...»

[*al-Furqān* (25): 63-64]

يَعْبَادُوا لَهُ خَوْفٌ
عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ مُحْزُنُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ الَّذِينَ مَاءَمُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
وَكَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

«My servants, you will feel no fear today; you will know no sorrow. As for those who had faith in Our signs and became Muslims: ‘Enter the Gardens, you

and your wives, delighting in your joy»

[az-Zukhruf (43): 68-69]¹¹

Finally, ibn 'Abbās explained this portion of the verse to mean,

You Alone we single out in worship, fear and hope; You and no-one else.¹²

وَإِنَّكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٦﴾

You Alone we ask for help

7.4 You Alone we ask for help

Meaning that we do not seek aid from anyone but You because the affair in its totality is under Your control Alone, no one else has even an atom's weight of control over it. Again the object of the verb has been brought before the verb to stress this fact. "**You Alone**" has been repeated twice in the verse to emphasise that both worship and asking for help are matters that should be directed to Allāh Alone; were the verse to read, 'You Alone we worship and ask for help,' it would then admit the possibility of asking other than Allāh for help.¹³

The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

¹¹ ibn al-Qayyim, pp. 92-93; Abū Ḥajjān, vol. 1, pg. 143

¹² at-Tabārī, vol. 1, pg. 99

¹³ al-Kirmānī, pg. 112; as-Sama'ānī, vol. 1, pg. 37; Abū Ḥajjān, vol. 1, pg. 143; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 122; ash-Shanqītī, vol. 1, pg. 33

Be mindful of Allāh and Allāh will protect you. Be mindful of Allāh and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, ask of Allāh, if you seek help, seek help with Allāh...¹⁴

To ask for help means that one has trust in, and dependance upon, the one being asked; this is none other than the meaning of 'tawakkul'.¹⁵ Therefore in this statement following His saying, "*You Alone we worship*" lies an indication that it is not permissible to put our *tawakkul* in anyone except the One who deserves worship because no one else has control over the affairs.¹⁶ This meaning which is alluded to here, is clearly explained in other verses:

فَاعْبُدُهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ

«So worship Him and put your trust in Him»

[Yūsuf (12): 123]

فَإِن تُولُّوْ أَقْرَبُ حَسِيبَ اللَّهَ لِأَلَّا
إِلَهُ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْظَّيِيرِ ⑤

«But if they turn away, say: Allāh is sufficient for me, none has the right to be worshipped but Him, in Him I put my trust...»

[Tawbah (9): 129]

رَبُّ الْشَّرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّحْذُهُ وَكِلْهُ ①

«The Lord of the East and the West, none deserves to be worshipped but Him, so take Him as the

¹⁴ Ahmad

¹⁵ ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 66

¹⁶ ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 48; ash-Shanqītī, vol. 1, pg. 33

Disposer of your affairs»[*al-Muzzammil* (73): 9]

قُلْ هُوَ
الرَّحْمَنُ عَامِلُهُ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُ الْمُسْتَعْلِمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ لَّا يُبَيِّنُ

«Say: He is the All-Merciful, we have believed in Him and put our trust in Him...»

[*al-Mulk* (67): 29]

The whole of the religion of Islām revolves around these two principles: we do not worship any save Allāh and we do not put our trust in anyone, or anything, save Him. These are the means to everlasting bliss and security from all evils, there is no path to success and everlasting felicity except by establishing these two pillars.¹⁷ It is for this reason that some of the *Salaf* said,

The secret of the Qur'ān lies in *al-Fatiḥah* and its secret is the verse, “*You Alone do we worship and You Alone we ask for help*”

“*You Alone do we worship*” has been mentioned before “*You Alone do we ask for help*” because worship is the intended goal and the help of Allah is the route to attaining that goal, hence the most important thing has been mentioned first. It is as if the servant is saying, ‘I have commenced this action of worship and I seek Your help in completing it.’ If it is asked, ‘Why mention seeking help after mentioning worship when it is known that seeking Allāh’s help to perform an action of worship should occur before that action?’ The answer to this is that what is required before the action of worship is the *tawfiq*, or divine accord, of Allāh, whereas help is required for the duration of the action of worship. Another reason

¹⁷ ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 48; as-Sa'dī

given is that the wording is by way of mentioning the general before the specific,¹⁸ and to show that attention should be given to His, Exalted is He, right before the right of His servant. This is because worship is something that Allah commands of us whereas help is something we require from Him.¹⁹

In this verse the asking of aid has been mentioned, but exactly in what has been left unmentioned, i.e. the objects of the verb ‘we ask for help’ have been omitted, this is so as to generalise the meaning of the verse to all actions, in the same way that we previously discussed for the *basmAllah*. The same applies to the statement, ‘we worship’.²⁰

Ibn Taymiyyah said, ‘I pondered the most beneficial supplication and I found it to be asking Allāh to help us in doing that which pleases Him; this I found in the verse, “*You Alone we worship and You Alone we ask for help*”²¹

‘Those who are closest to Allāh are those who fulfill this verse the most, the Prophet (ﷺ), out of love for him, said to Mu'ādh,

O Mu'ādh! By Allāh, I love you and I enjoin you never to leave saying these words at the end of every prayer, ‘O Allāh! Help me in remembering You, thanking You

¹⁸ i.e. seeking help is part of worship

¹⁹ as-Sama'i, vol. 1, pg. 37; al-Baghawi, vol. 1, pg. 54; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 49; ibn al-Qayyim, vol. 1, pg. 67; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pp. 201-202; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 119; as-Sa'dī

²⁰ an-Nasafī, vol. 1, pg. 16; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 202; Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 143; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 122

²¹ ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 71

and making good my worship of You.²²

7.5 Asking of the creation

The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

Be mindful of Allāh and Allāh will protect you. Be mindful of Allāh and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, ask of Allāh, if you seek help, seek help with Allāh...²³

This ḥadīth expresses the same meaning as the verse under discussion and clearly shows that Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent, is the One who should be asked and the One from whom help should be sought. With regards to asking in general, Allāh says,

وَسْأَلُوكُمُ اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ

«Ask Allāh of His bounty»

[*an-Nisā'* (4): 32]

at-Tirmidhī records the ḥadīth reported on the authority of ibn Mas'ūd that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

Ask Allāh of His bounty for Allāh loves to be asked.²⁴

and on the authority of Abū Hurayrah,

²² Abū Dāwūd #1522 and Ahmād #22119, 22126. It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Hibbān #2020, ibn Khuzaymāh #751, al-Ḥākim #1010 with adh-Dhahabī agreeing and al-Albānī #7969.

The du'a is also recorded on the authority of Abū Hurayrah by Ahmād #7982

²³ Ahmād

²⁴ at-Tirmidhī #3571 and it was declared da'iif by al-Manāwī, vol. 4, pg. 143, and al-Albānī #3278

Allāh is angry at the one who does not ask of Him²⁵

and in another ḥadīth,

Each of you should ask his Lord to fulfil his need, even if it be his shoe-lace when it breaks.²⁶

There are many ahādīth that prohibit one from asking of the creation, indeed the Prophet (ﷺ) took a pledge from a group of his Companions that they would never ask people for anything, amongst these were Abū Bakr, Abū Dharr and Thawbān.²⁷ Know that asking of Allāh and not the creation is what is necessary. This is because to ask is to display humbleness and submissiveness before the one being asked as well as dependence upon him; it also contains an implicit acknowledgment that the one being asked has the ability to remove harm, grant the object of desire and promote benefit. It is not allowable to show humility, submissiveness and need except to Allāh alone because these matters exemplify the reality of worship. Ahmad used to supplicate, ‘O Allāh! Just as You have prevented my face to prostrating to other than You, also prevent it from asking of other than You.’ None is able to remove harm or promote the good save Him as He says,

وَإِن يَمْسِكَ اللَّهُ بِعُذْرَةٍ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ أَنْتَ
يُرِدُكَ بِغَيْرِ فَلَارَادَ لِغَصِيلِهِ، يُحَسِّبُكَ مِنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ

«If Allāh afflicts you with harm, no one can re-

²⁵ at-Tirmidhī #3373, Ahmad #9701, 9719, 10178. It was declared ḥasan by as-Suyū̄i #2622 and saḥīḥ by al-Albānī #2418

²⁶ at-Tirmidhī #3612 who said it was gharīb and it was declared dā'iif by al-Albānī #4945, 4946

²⁷ Muslim #1043

move it except Him. If He desires good for you,
no one can avert His favour»

[*Yūmūs* (10): 107]

Allāh loves to be asked, to be hoped in and desired at times of need, to be supplicated frequently and resolutely. He is able to grant all of mankind all their requests without his dominion decreasing in the slightest. Created beings on the other are the exact opposite, they dislike being asked due to their own inability, need and poverty. This is why Wahb bin Munahbih said to one who would frequent the door of the ruler, 'Woe to you! You run to one who would shut his door in your face, display his poverty to you and conceal his riches and you leave One who opens His door to you in the middle of the night and the middle of the day, who displays His richness and proclaims, "*invoke Me and I will respond*"' Tāwūs said to 'Aṭā', 'Beware of asking your needs to be met by one who would close his door in your face, instead it is upon you to go to the One whose door is open until the Day of Judgment, One who has ordered you to ask Him and promised you that He would respond.'

With regards asking Allāh Alone for help, this is because man alone cannot promote good for himself or repress harm, hence there is no one who can aid him to promote benefit in his religious and worldly life except for Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent. The servant is in perpetual need of the aid of Allāh in performing the obligations, leaving the prohibitions and bearing with patience the vicissitudes of the decree in this life and after death. The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

...be desirous of that which would benefit you and ask
the aid of Allāh and do not become disheartened²⁸

²⁸ Muslim #2664

al-Hasan wrote to 'Umar bin 'Abdu-l-'Aziz, 'Do not seek the aid of any besides Allāh or else Allāh would abandon you to him.' One of the Salaf would say, 'My Lord! I am amazed at how one who knows You can place his hope in someone else and ask the help of someone else.'²⁹

7.6 Change from the third person to the second person

Moreover this verse employs an address in the second person and this is most fitting at such an occasion because when one turns to invoke his Lord, He is near and responsive. Allāh, Exalted is He says,

إِذَا سَأَلَكُ
عَبْدًا يَعْقِلُ فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ مَّا تَدْعُونَ
أَنِّي أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَنْتُ فِيهِ إِذَا دَعَكَانِ

«When My servants asks you concerning Me then I am close. I respond to the invocation of the suppliant when he calls upon Me»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 186]

²⁹ ibn Rajab, vol., *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa-l-Hikam*, vol. 1, pp. 478-482, with summary.

One must realise that it is not unlawful to ask of created beings for things within human ability but one recourse to it when he has to, ones trust must always be in Allāh, Exalted is He, and one must believe that the one helping or being asked for help is but a means to an end. Refer to ibn Taymiyyah, vol. 1, pp. 103-105, 434.

However, it must also be realised that it is, even without being asked, recommended for a Muslim to go to the aid of his brother in faith in affairs that would further his religious life or permissible worldly life. Muslim records that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, 'Whoever relieves a believer from a distress of this world, Allāh will rescue him from a difficulty of the difficulties of the Hereafter. Whoever alleviates the situation of one in dire straits who cannot repay his debt, Allāh will alleviate his lot in both this world and the Hereafter. Whoever conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allāh will conceal his faults in this life and the Hereafter. Allāh is helping the servant so long as the servant is helping his brother.'

The previous verses were in the third person as they were informing us about Allāh. Another explanation given is that the style of the verses has changed from the third person to second person in order to stimulate and awaken the reciter such that his attention is drawn to the content of the verse.³⁰

7.7 Why is this verse in the plural?

If it is asked: why does the verse state "*we worship*" when there is only one person reciting it?

Some answer by postulating that by saying this, the servant is expressing his own deficient state. It is as if he is saying, 'My Lord! My worship has not reached any level whereby it deserves to be mentioned, being wrought with deficiency, so I will mix it with mention of the worship of all servants to give it some significance.'³¹

Others say the answer lies in the fact that the wise *Shari'ah* has legislated many actions of worship to be done in congregation and it has also recommended for the servant of Allāh to supplicate for his brother Muslim.³² Shaykh Ṣalīḥ bin Ghānim as-Sadlān writes while discussing the virtue of congregational prayer,

From amongst the lofty qualities of the Islamic *Shari'ah* is that it has legislated many actions of worship to be done in congregation. The Muslims gather that they may keep in contact with each other, come to know each other, seek advice from one another, seek help in re-

³⁰ al-Baydāwī, vol. 1, pg. 64; Abū Hayyān, vol. 1, pg. 141; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 22

³¹ al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 118

³² ar-Rāzi, vol. 1, pg. 213; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 202; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 119

moving any difficulties that they may be in, and discuss various issues with each other. This contains great benefit and many desirable points which cannot be enumerated such as teaching the ignorant, helping the needy, softening the hearts, and manifesting the greatness of Islām. The Heavenly Revelation endorses this understanding for when it prohibits and commands it does not direct this prohibition to any specific individual but to the congregation as a whole. Allāh says,

بِتَائِبَةِ الَّذِينَ مَأْمَنُوا إِذْ كَفَرُوا سُجْدًا وَاعْبُدُوا
 رَبِّكُمْ وَافْعُلُوا الْخَيْرَ لِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْلِحُونَ ﴿٧﴾
 وَجَهْدُكُمْ فِي الْحَقِّ جَهَادٌ

«O you who believe! Bow, prostrate and worship your Lord. Perform the good so that you may be successful and perform *Jihād* in the way of Allāh as it should be done...»

[*al-Hajj* (22):77-78]

When the Muslim stands before Allāh, intimately conversing with Him and humbling himself before Him, he does not speak as an individual rather he speaks as one part of the whole. He says,

إِلَيْكَ نَبْتَدِئُ وَإِلَيْكَ نَسْتَبِئُ ﴿١﴾

«You Alone do we worship and You Alone we ask for help»

[*al-Fātiḥah* (1):5]

He does not say, 'It is only You I worship and it is only Your Aid I seek.' Then he asks Him from His goodness

and guidance but he does not ask for himself only, instead he says,

إِلَيْكَ نَبَّهْتُ وَإِلَيْكَ نَسْتَعِنُ ◇ أَهْدَيْنَا^{٣٣}
 الْقِرَاطُ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ◇ سَرَطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرَ الْمَفْصُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ
 وَلَا أَنْكَثْنَا ◇

«Guide us to the Straight Path. The Path of those whom You have guided, not [the path] of those who have earned [Your] anger nor those who have gone astray»

[*al-Fātībah* (1):6-7]

Indeed the congregational prayer is from the greatest of means to removing sectarian differences and racism based upon ones colour, race or land. Through the congregational prayer the Muslims attain mutual love, respect and brotherhood. This because the elders become known and are thereby respected, the poor and needy become known and are thereby helped, the scholars become known and are thereby asked, and the ignorant become known and are thereby taught.³³

Muslim records on the authority of Abū ad-Dardā' that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

There is no Muslim who supplicates for his brother in his absence except that the Angels say: The same for you as well.³⁴

³³ Sālih as-Sadlān, *Salātu-l-Jamā'ah Hukmuhā wa Abkāmuhā*, pp. 23-24

³⁴ Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 4, pg. 1429 #6588

7.7 Why is this verse in the plural?

Muslim also records on the authority of Abū 2d-Dardā' that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

The supplication of a Muslim for his brother in his absence is answered. At his head is the Angel commissioned [for conveying the supplication to Allāh], whenever he supplicates for good for his brother, the Angel says: And for you is the same.³⁵

³⁵ Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 4, pg. 1429 #6590

7.8 The place of this verse in the *Sūrah*

After having established that Allāh deserves praise, that He should be loved, after having pondered some of His Names, Attributes, and Actions, after having combined within ourselves desire and dread of Him, the intelligent person will now turn to such a one and direct his worship to him.³⁶

To worship Allāh is to display the gratitude due Him and to establish His *Ulūhiyyah* because He is the one who is deserving of being worshipped to the exception of all else. To ask Him for help is to display the gratitude due Him and to establish His *Rubūbiyyah* because He is the One who controls and regulates all affairs. This is why this verse has been mentioned after having mentioned His Name, ‘Allāh’ and His Name, ‘Lord’.³⁷

Ibn al-Qayyim said,

“The witnessing of His *Ulūhiyyah* and *Rubūbiyyah* are realised in this verse. When the servant says, “*You Alone*” he is witnessing the Essence that combines together all the Attributes of perfection and possesses every Beautiful Name. When the servant says, “*we worship*,” he is witnessing all actions of worship, outward and inward, in intention, speech, deed, and state. When he says, “*You Alone we worship*,” he has combined and witnessed *Ilāhiyyah*. When he says, “*You Alone we ask for help*,” he is witnessing all types of asking for help, realising *tawakkul*, and relegating his affairs to Allāh. Through this statement the servant has combined and witnessed

³⁶ al-Baqā'i, vol. 1, pg. 16

³⁷ Rashid Ridā, vol. 1, pg. 54

*Rubūbiyyah.*³⁸

He also said,

"This chapter describes the worshipped may He be blessed and Exalted through three of His Names; and all the Beautiful Names and Perfect Attributes revolve around these three: Allāh, ar-Rabb, and ar-Rahmān. This chapter is built upon the pillars of *Ulūhiyyah*, *Rubūbiyyah*, and *rahmab*. "*You Alone we worship*", is built upon *Ulūhiyyah*, "*You Alone we ask for help*," is built upon *Rubūbiyyah*,³⁹ and asking for guidance to the Straight Path is done through the attribute of *rahmab*. Praising, *hamd*, also encompasses these three matters for He is praised for His *Ulūhiyyah*, His *Rubūbiyyah*, and His mercy."⁴⁰

al-Farghānī said that whoever recites this verse is saved from the deviancy of *qadr*⁴¹ and *jabr*.⁴² "*We worship*" saves from *jabr* and "*we ask for help*" saves from *qadr*. Moreover, "*You Alone*" comprises a refutation of the *Dahriyyah*⁴³ and atheists because it is an address directed to something which is present.⁴⁴

In summary, 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās said in explanation to this verse,

³⁸ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Salikin*, vol. 3, pg. 331

³⁹ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Salikin*, vol. 1, pg. 9

⁴⁰ i.e. the belief that man has a completely free will

⁴¹ i.e. the belief that man has no free will, that he is coerced into doing whatever he does.

⁴² Those who deny the existence or reality of the Hereafter

⁴³ at-Tabarī, vol. 1, pg. 99; al-Qurtubī, vol. 1, pg. 101; Abū Hayyān, vol. 1, pg. 143

O our Lord! It is You Alone that we single out for belief, fear and hope. It is Your aid Alone that we seek in order to obey You and indeed in all of our affairs⁴⁴

⁴⁴ ibn Kathir, vol. 1, pg. 49; as-Suyūqī, vol. 1, pg. 39

CHAPTER VIII

◎ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

Guide us to the Straight Path,
The Path of those whom You have
favoured

After praising Allāh, the servant then proceeds to ask of Him from His bounty and blessings. This is the most virtuous way of asking Allāh by first praising Him, expressing ones servitude to Him and then asking of Him.¹ It is in this respect that Prophet ﷺ said,

O Allāh! To You belongs all praise. You are the Lord of the heavens and the earth. To You belongs all praise, You are the Maintainer and Creator of the heavens and the earth and whosoever is in them. To You belongs all praise, You are the Light of the heavens and the earth.

¹ ibn Kathir, vol. 1, pg. 50; ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 23

Your saying is the truth, Your promise is the truth, the meeting with You is the truth, Paradise is true, Hellfire is true and the Hour is true. O Allāh! To You I have submitted, in You I have believed, upon You do I rely, to You I repent, with You I stand against all opposition, and to You I go for judgment; forgive me all that I have done in the past, what I will do in the future, what I have kept secret and what I have openly shown. You are my God, there is none worthy of worship except for You.²

thereby first praising Allāh, then expressing his servitude to Him and then asking of Him.

8.1 The mannerisms of supplication

Abū Dāwūd records on the authority of Faḍālah bin 'Ubaid that

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) heard a man supplicating in prayer. He did not glorify Allāh and neither did he invoke blessings on the Prophet (ﷺ). The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "He made haste." He then called him and said to him or to those around him, "If any one of you prays, he should commence by glorifying his Lord and praising Him; he should invoke peace and blessings on the Prophet (ﷺ) and thereafter he should supplicate to Allāh for anything he wishes."³

al-Hāfiẓ ibn al-Qayyim explains the causes that lead to ones sup-

² Bukhārī #6888 on the authority of ibn 'Abbās

³ Abū Dāwūd Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 390 #1476; at-Tirmidhī #3476; an-Nasā'ī, vol. 3, pg. 44; Ahmad #23937. at-Tirmidhī said it was ḥasan ṣabīḥ, al-Hākim #840 said it was ṣabīḥ with adh-Dhahabī agreeing, as did ibn Khuzaymah #709 and al-Albānī, *Sabīḥ Abū Dāwūd* #1314

plication being answered in a beautiful way saying,

When the servant combines in his supplication presence of the heart and its being attentive and devoting itself solely to Allāh, sincerely asking Him for the desired matter, doing so at one of the six times when the supplication is more likely to be answered - these being:

- The last third of the night.
- At the time of the *adhan*.
- Between the *adhan* and *iqamah*.
- At the ends of the prescribed prayers.
- From the time the Imām ascends the pulpit to the time the prayer has finished on the day of *Jumu'ah*.
- The last hour after the prayer of *'Asr*.

Alongside this the servant appends fear and reverence in the heart, beseeching his Lord in a state of humility and submissiveness. He faces the *Qiblah* and is in a state of purity, he raises his hands to Allāh and begins by praising and extolling Him, then he invokes peace and blessings upon Muhammad, His servant and Messenger (ﷺ). He precedes mentioning his need by seeking forgiveness from Allāh and then he earnestly and sincerely makes his request as one who is needy and impoverished, supplicating to Him out of hope and fear. He seeks the means of getting close to Him by mentioning His Names and Attributes and making the religion sincerely for Him Alone. Before making supplication he gives in charity. If all this is done then this supplication will never be rejected especially if the servant employs the supplications that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) informed us would be accepted or if his supplication in-

cludes mention of Allāh's Greatest Name.⁴

The words, "*guide us*" are in the imperative and when said by the servant directed to his Lord, are employed to express his dire need and ardent desire for what he is asking for, when the imperative form comes from Allāh, on the other hand, it is used to convey a command.⁵

8.2 Meaning of *hidāyah*

The word *hidāyah*, linguistically meaning direction and guidance, is used in two senses in the Qur'ān.

1. Guidance of clarification and direction, not taking into account whether the person to whom it has been clarified traverses the path of guidance or not.

In this respect is the saying of Allāh,

وَمَا نَهَىٰهُمْ فَهُدِيَّتْهُمْ فَاسْتَجِبُوا لِلْعَنْنَىٰ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ

«As for the Thamūd, We guided them but they preferred blindness over guidance»

[Fussilat (41): 17]

meaning: We made clear to them the True Way upon the tongue of our Prophet Ṣāliḥ, upon him and our Prophet be peace and blessings, despite the fact that they did not traverse this way as proven by His saying, "*but they preferred blindness over guidance.*"

⁴ ibn al-Qayyim, *ad-Dā'i wa-d-Dawā'* pp. 13-14

⁵ ibn 'Atīyyah, vol. 1, pg. 73; Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 146; See also ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 10.

8.2 Meaning of bidāyah

In this respect also is His saying,

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السِّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا ﴿٧﴾

«Indeed, We guided him, whether he be grateful or ungrateful»

[*al-Insān* (76): 3]

meaning: We have made clear to him the Way of Good and the Way of Evil as proven by His saying, "*whether he be grateful or ungrateful.*"

2. The specific type of guidance which is Allāh bestowing His grace upon the servant by making him accord to the Way of Truth.

With this respect is His sayings,

أَزْيَّنَكُمْ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ أَفْتَدَهُمْ

«They are the ones whom Allāh guided, so follow their guidance»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 90]

فَمَن يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَن يَهْدِيَهُ يُشَحِّ صَدَرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ

«Whoever Allāh Wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islām»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 125]

When you come to understand this then any difficulties in understanding the following sayings of Allāh will also be removed,

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَا كُنْ أَنْتَ
الَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ

«Indeed you [O Muḥammad] cannot guide those
you love, but Allāh guides whom He wills»

[*al-Qasas* (28): 56]

إِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صَرْطَنْ مُشَتَّقِينَ

«And indeed you [O Muḥammad] are guiding [man-kind]
to the Straight Path»

[*ash-Shūrā* (42): 52]

because the aspect of guidance that has been negated is the specific guidance which is in the hands of Allāh Alone. As for the aspect of guidance that has been affirmed, it is the general guidance which is to clarify the truth; and the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) explained this to the extent that it became like a great white plain whose night is like its day.^{6,7}

There is also a third sense to the word guidance that was mentioned by ibn al-Qayyim, and that is guidance on the Day of Judgement along the path to Paradise - this being the bridge leading to it. So the one who is guided in this life to the Straight Path will be guided to the straight path in the Hereafter that leads to His Paradise. His firmness on the path that Day will be dependant on how firmly he trod the Straight Path in this life.⁸

⁶ Referring to the ḥadīth, “I have left you upon the great white plain, its night is like its day, none deviates from it except he who is destroyed.”

Recorded by ibn Mājah, al-Hākim and Ahmād on the authority of ‘Irḥād ibn Sāriyah. Refer to *as-Sabībah* #937 for detailed documentation.

⁷ ash-Shanqītī, vol. 1, pg. 38; vol. 10, pp. 6-7

⁸ ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Salikin*, vol. 1, pg. 16

8.3 The Straight Path

A path, *Tariq*, cannot be regarded to be a true path, *sirāt*, unless five conditions are met: that it is straight, that it leads to the intended goal, that it is close to the objective, that it is expansive enough to accommodate those traversing it, and that it has been sign-posted as being the actual route to the goal. The fact that this Path is straight proves that it is close for the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. The fact that is straight proves that it leads to the object. The fact that it has been appointed for all those who would traverse it shows that it is wide enough to accommodate them. The fact that the Path has been adjoined to the One who has blessed them shows that it has been so sign-posted.⁹

The phrase '*The Straight Path*', here has the definitive article, *al*, adjoined to it to indicate that it is the most deserving of being described with the quality of being straight and a *sirāt*. Moreover, the servant is asking for direction to a specific path and not any path, that path that Allāh has erected for the inhabitants of Paradise. Now, because the servant knows full well that there is a path that belongs to Allāh and leads to Him, a path traversed by His Prophets and Messengers, he asks for direction to this specific path and hence it is befitting to adjoin it to the definitive article. In other places of the Qur'ān however, where the context is not one of supplicating and asking, rather one of describing or informing, we find that the phrase '*Straight Path*' has been left in the indefinite form such as

لِغَفْرَانِكَ اللَّهُمَّ مَا نَقَدْمَ مِنْ ذَنْبٍ كَ
وَمَا تَأْخُرُ وَتُبَرِّئُ نَفْسَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَتَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطَ شَرِيفِكَما

⁹ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Sālikin*, vol. 1, pg. 16

«...so that Allāh may forgive you your earlier errors and any later ones, and complete His blessings upon you, and guide you to a Straight Path...»

[*al-Fatḥ* (48): 2]

وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صَرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٦﴾

«Truly you are guiding to a Straight Path.»

[*Sbūrā* (42): 52]

وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى صَرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٦﴾

«We chose them and guided them to a Straight Path.»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 87]

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَيْتُنِي رَبِّي
إِلَى صَرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيمًا مِنْهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا

«Say: My Lord has guided me to a Straight Path, a well founded way of life, the religion of Ibrāhīm...»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 161]¹⁰

The verse "*Guide us to the Straight Path*," has been mentioned without the verb "Guide," being adjoined to the particle, *ilā*, or, *hī*, rather it is linked directly to the object. When the verb "Guide" is adjoined to *ilā*, it lends the meaning of reaching the goal, when the verb is linked to *hī*, it lends to the meaning of pointing out something and specifying it. When it is mentioned with neither of the two, it lends to the meaning of both. Hence the meaning of the verse would be: define this Path to us, explain it to us, direct us to

¹⁰ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Bada'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pp. 252-256

it, and grant us the accord to follow it.¹¹

The Straight Path is the path that the one journeying to Allāh traverses and it is none other than obedience to Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ). The *Salaf* have described the Straight Path in various ways but all of their definitions revolve around this basic fact:

1. The Book of Allāh as stated by 'Alī bin Abū Ṭalib, ibn Mas'ūd and others.
2. Islām as stated by ibn 'Abbās, ibn Mas'ūd, ad-Dahhāk and others. Ibn Mas'ūd said that the Straight Path was wider than the distance between heaven and earth.
3. The Religion of Allāh other than which He will not accept as stated by ibn al-Hanafiyyah
4. The Prophet (ﷺ) and the two *Khalīfs* who followed him as stated by Abū al-'Āliyah and Hasan al-Baṣrī.
5. The truth as stated by Mujāhid.
6. The Path to Paradise as stated by Sa'id bin Jubair.
7. The way of the Prophet (ﷺ) as stated by Bakr bin 'Abdullāh al-Muzānī.¹²

All of these opinions are correct and consistent. So whosoever follows Islām has followed the Prophet (ﷺ) and the two *Khalīfs* after him, i.e. Abū Bakr and 'Umar. Whosoever has followed them has followed the Truth and whosoever has followed the truth has followed the Qur'ān and whosoever has followed the Qur'ān has obeyed Allāh.¹³

¹¹ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Bada'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pp. 262

¹² ibn 'Atīyyah, vol. 1, pg. 74; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 2, pp. 207-208; Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 146; as-Suyūtī, vol. 1, pp. 40-41; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 24

¹³ ibn 'Atīyyah, vol. 1, pg. 74; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 50-51

Ibn al-Qayyim said,

We will expound upon the Straight Path in a succinct manner for the people have explained it in various ways all of them revolving around one essential fact. The Straight Path is the path of Allāh which He has put in place to lead mankind to Him; there is no path to Him other than this one which He appointed upon the tongues of His Messengers. It is to single Him out alone for worship and to single out His Messengers alone for obedience. Therefore none should commit *shirk* in His worship just as none should commit *shirk* in the following of His Messenger (ﷺ); one should purify his *tawhid* and purify his following of the Messenger (ﷺ), this is the full import of the testification that, 'None has the right to be worshipped save Allāh and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh.' All of the various explanations given to the Straight Path fall under these two principles. You must love Him with all your heart, you must try to please Him to the utmost of your ability; there should not be any area of your heart except that it is overflowing with love of Him and you should have no desire except to please Him. The first point is realised through actualising, 'None has the right to be worshipped save Allāh' and the second point is realised through actualising, 'Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh.' This is guidance and the religion of truth, this is knowing the truth and acting upon it, this in turn is knowing what He sent His Messenger with and living by it. All definitions revolve around this essential concept. Sahl bin 'Abdullāh said, 'stick to the narrations and Sunnah for I fear that soon will come a time that when the Prophet (ﷺ) and the importance of following him in everything is mentioned, the people would censure the person who says this, cause others to flee from him, disassociate them-

selves from him, humiliate him and disgrace him.¹⁴

at-Tirmidhī records on the authority of Nāwās b. Sām'ān that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

Allāh has set forth the following as a parable: there is a road that leads straight to the destination. On either side of the road there is a wall in which there are open doors with curtains hanging on them. From the remote end of the road, a voice calls, 'Proceed straight and do not turn aside.' Whenever someone intends to lift a curtain from the door another voice calls from above, 'Beware! Do not lift the curtain, otherwise you will be lured inside.'

The Prophet (ﷺ) explained the parable by saying that the straight path is Islām, the walls are the limits imposed by Allāh, the open doors are the things that he has prohibited, the voice which calls from the end of the road is the Qur'ān and the voice which calls from above is Allāh's monitor in the heart of every believer.¹⁵

From the above verse we also learn that the Straight Path is one path and not many, indeed anything that deviates from it is to be regarded as misguidance.¹⁶ ash-Shātibī explains this further by saying,

¹⁴ 'Abdur-Rahmān Ālī ash-Shaykh, *Fath al-Majd Sharḥ Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, pg. 24 who summarised this from ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pp. 280+

¹⁵ at-Tirmidhī #76, and Ahmad #17634, 17636. It was declared hasan gharib by at-Tirmidhī and sahih by al-Ḥākim #245 with adh-Dhahabī agreeing and al-Albānī #3887.

¹⁶ ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 14

وَإِنْ هَذَا أَصْرَطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَنْبِغُوا إِلَيْهِ
 شَرِقٌ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ دَالُكُمْ وَصَنْكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
 تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦﴾

«And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not [other] paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. This He has ordained for you that you may become pious»

[al-An'ām (6): 153]

The Straight Path is the path to which Allāh has named and that is the Sunnah. The other paths are the paths of the people of disagreement who deviate from the Straight Path, and they are the People of Innovation. The intended meaning here is not the 'paths of disobedience' because no one makes disobedience a path that he continuously treads upon - in imitation of and resemblance to the legislation, but rather this description is specifically for the newly invented innovations.

In what Ismā'il has narrated from Sulaimān bin Harb lies evidence for this: Hammād bin Zaid narrated to us; from 'Aṣim bin Bahdalah; from Abū Wā'il; from 'Abdullāh [ibn 'Abbās] who said,

'One Day the Messenger (ﷺ) drew for us a long, straight line' and then Sulaimān drew for us a long, straight line, 'And then he drew lines to its right and to its left and then said, "This is the Path of Allāh." Then he drew lines to its right and to its left and said, "These are different paths, upon each of these ways is a devil calling to it", and then he recited the verse,

وَإِنْ هَذَا أَصْرَطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَنْبِغُوا إِلَيْهِ

«And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it,
and follow not [other] paths...»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 153]

meaning these paths

فَلَنْرُقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ

«...for they will separate you away from His Path»
[*al-An'ām* (6): 153]

Bakr bin 'Alā said, 'He meant the devils amongst men
and these [other paths] are the innovations and Allāh
knows best.'

The ḥadīth has been reported in many ways.

'Umar bin Salamah al-Hamdāni said, "We were sitting
in the circle of Ibn Mas'ūd in the *Masjid*, which had
been plain land after it had been covered with gravel.
'Ubaydullāh bin 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who had just re-
turned from an expedition asked him, 'What is the
Straight Path O Abū 'Abdur-Rahmān?' He replied, 'By
the Lord of the Ka'bah, it is that which your father was
firmly established upon until he entered Paradise' and he swore firmly upon that three times. Then he drew a
line in the ground with his hand and also drew lines to
either side of it and said, 'Your Prophet (ﷺ) left you
upon this end and its other end is in Paradise. So who-
ever remains steadily upon it will enter Paradise and
whoever takes any of these lines will be destroyed.'"

In another narration [the wording is], "O Abū 'Abdur-
Rahmān, what is the straight path?" He replied, "The
Messenger (ﷺ) left us upon the nearest end of the line
and its other end is in Paradise. And to its left and right
are roads in which there are men who invite those who

pass by them, saying, ‘Come this way! Come this way!’ So whoever is taken by them to those paths will end up in Hellfire and whoever remains steadfast upon the great path will end up, through it, in Paradise.” Then ibn Mas’ud recited,

وَإِنْ هَذَا إِصْرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَنْتَهِيُوا أَنْشِبْلَ
فَنَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَنَّكُمْ يَدُهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَنَقُّونَ ﴿١٥﴾

«And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not [other] paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. This He has ordained for you that you may become pious»

[*al-An’ām* (6): 153]

Mujāhid said about the saying of Allāh:

وَلَا تَنْتَهِيُوا أَنْشِبْلَ

«...and follow not [other] paths»

[*al-An’ām* (6): 153]

[That it refers to] innovations and doubts.

‘Abdur-Rahmān bin Mahdi said, “Mālik bin Anas had been asked about the Sunnah to which he replied, ‘It is whatever has no other name for it except ‘The Sunnah’ and he recited,

وَإِنْ هَذَا إِصْرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَنْتَهِيُوا أَنْشِبْلَ
فَنَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَنَّكُمْ يَدُهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَنَقُّونَ ﴿١٥﴾

«And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not [other] paths, for they will separate you away from His Path»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 153]”

Bakr bin 'Alā said, “He means - if Allāh wills - the ḥadīth of ibn Mas'ūd that the Messenger (ﷺ) drew a line...” and he mentioned the ḥadīth.

This explanation shows that the verse includes all the different paths of innovation and does not specify one innovation over others. Also amongst the verses [that are related to the censure of innovation] is the saying of Allāh the Exalted,

وَعَلَّ اللَّهُ قَصْدُ النَّكِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَاهَارٌ وَلُؤْشَاءٌ لَمَّا هُمْ كُمْ

أَجْمَعُونَ ①

«And upon Allāh is the responsibility to explain the Straight Path but there are ways that turn aside. And had He willed, He would have guided you all»

[*an-Nahl* (16): 9]

The explained path is the Path of Truth and that which is other than it, turns away from the truth - and these are the paths of innovations and misguidance - may Allāh protect us, by His Excellence, from travelling upon them. It is sufficient for whatever turns away [from the Truth] that it is warned against and the verse contains a warning and a prohibition [of taking other paths that deviate from the Truth].

Ibn Waddāḥ mentioned that “Āsim bin Bahdalah was questioned: ‘O Abū Bakr, have you considered the saying of Allāh, the Exalted,

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَاهَارٌ وَلُؤْسَكَةٌ لَمْ يَتَكَثُرْ
أَجْمَعِينَ ①

«And upon Allāh is the responsibility to explain the Straight Path but there are ways that turn aside. And had He willed, He would have guided you all»
[an-Nāhl (16): 9]

He replied, 'Abū Wā'il informed us; from 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd saying, "Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd drew a straight line and drew lines to its right and to its left and then said, 'The Messenger (ﷺ) drew just like this. He said about the straight line, 'This is the path of Allāh' and about the lines to its right and left he said, 'These are different ways, upon each of these ways is a devil calling to it.' Allāh the Exalted said,

وَإِنَّ هَذَا أَصْرَطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ

«And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it...»
[al-An'ām (6): 153]

to the end of the verse.”

at-Tustarī said, “Explanation of the path - that is the path of the Sunnah; ‘Ways that turn aside’ - meaning to the Hellfire and they are the sects and innovations.”

Mujāhid said, “Explanation of the path - meaning the one who is justly balanced between exaggeration and negligence,” and this shows that the one who turns aside is one who commits excesses or is negligent, and both of them are amongst the descriptions of the innovations.”

From 'Ali (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*), that he used to read the

verse, '*wa min kum ja'ir...*' (and amongst you is one that turns aside). They said, "He means by that [from] this nation."

So it is as if this verse along with the one before it have come with the same meaning.¹⁷

8.4 Allāh is on the Straight Path

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

«...My Lord is on the Straight Path»

[*Hūd* (11): 56]

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِرَجُلَيْنِ
أَحَدُهُمَا أَبْنَكُمْ لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَىٰ شَوْتٍ وَهُوَ كَلُّ عَلَىٰ
مَوْلَاهُ إِنَّمَا يُوَجِّهُهُ لَا يَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ هُلْ يَسْتَوِي هُوَ وَمَنْ
يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِصِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

«Allāh makes another metaphor: two men, one of them deaf and dumb, unable to do anything, a burden to his master, no matter where he directs him he brings no good, is he the same as someone who commands justice and is on a straight path?»

[*an-Nahl* (16): 76]

This latter parable has been propounded for the idols that are worshipped, they cannot hear, speak or comprehend, they are a burden upon the one who worships them, for the idol needs its wor-

¹⁷ ash-Shāfi‘ī, *al-Ittiqām*, vol. 1, pp. 40-45 translation by Abū ‘Iyād and modified.

shipper to carry it, tend to it, care for it etc. How is it then possible think that worshipping these is in any way comparable to the worship of Allāh who commands justice and *tawhid*?! He is upon the Straight Path in speech and action, all that He says is the very truth and true guidance, all that He does is pure wisdom, justice, mercy and nothing but benefit; nothing that even resembles evil can come close to His speech and action.¹⁸

8.5 Why supplicate for guidance to the Straight Path?

If it is asked why is one supplicating for guidance to the Straight Path when a Muslim is already regarded to be on the Straight Path? Shaykh al-Islām ibn Taymiyyah says,

...The case mentioned above is similar to what some of them ask concerning His saying, "*Guide us to the Straight Path*" [*al-Fātiḥah* (1): 6] saying: 'Allāh has already guided the believer, so what benefit is there in seeking guidance?' Then some of them reply by saying that the meaning is 'Keep us firm upon guidance' as the Arab would say to the one who is asleep, 'Sleep until I come to you'. Others say that the meaning is, 'Keep our hearts firm upon the guidance' and that the request for firmness has been omitted. Yet others from amongst them say that it means, 'Increase me in guidance.'

This question really occurs due to the absence of their pondering the Straight Path to which the servant seeks guidance to, for the meaning [of the verse] is [seeking guidance to] act according to what Allāh ordered, and leaving what He forbade in all matters.

¹⁸ ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 18

This is because the person, even if he has believed that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh and that the Qur'ān is the truth in a general way, is commonly in need of knowledge of that which would benefit him and harm him. He is in need of knowledge concerning what he has been commanded to do and forbidden from doing in the finer aspects of his life and in those areas of which he has no knowledge. [Not only this but we find that] that which he does have knowledge of, he does not put the greater part of it to practice! Assuming that all of the commands and prohibitions contained in the Qur'ān and Sunnah have reached him, then the Qur'ān and Sunnah contain laws that are general and universal for which it is not possible to specify to every individual person - therefore the person has been commanded due to the likes of this to ask for guidance to the Straight Path.

Guidance to the Straight Path includes all of the following matters: cognisance of what the Messenger (ﷺ) came with in detail, cognisance of what comes under his general orders and concern for acting according to ones knowledge, for indeed just having knowledge is not a cause for attaining guidance if one does not act according to his knowledge. This is why He said to His Prophet after the treaty of *Hudaybiyyah*,

إِنَّا فَهَنَا لَكَ فَتَحْمِلُونَا ۝ لِيغْفِرَ لَكُمْ اللَّهُ مَا تَقْدَمْ مِنْ ذَنْبٍكَ
وَمَا تَأْخُرُ وَمِنْهُمْ بِعْصَمَةٍ، عَلَيْكَ وَهِدِيكَ مِنْ طَائِسَتِي بِكَ ۝

«Indeed We have given you a manifest victory. That Allāh may forgive you your sins of the past and future, complete His Favour upon you, and guide you on a Straight Path»

[Fath (48): 1-2]

and He said with respect to Mūsā and Harūn,

وَإِنَّنَّهُمَا لِكَتَبٍ
الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمَا الْقِرْطَاطُ الْمُسْتَقِيمُ

«and We gave them the clear Scripture, and guided them to the Right Path»

[as-Sāffāt (37): 117-118]

The Muslims have differed as to what Allāh willed from the textual matters - matters of knowledge, belief and action while all of them are agreed that Muḥammad is the truth and the Qur'ān is the truth. If all of them were to have attained guidance to the Straight Path in totality, they would never have differed. Furthermore the majority of those who know what Allāh has ordered disobey Him and do not follow His Way. If they were guided to the Straight Path in these matters then they certainly would have performed what they had been commanded to do, and left what they had been forbidden from. As for those whom Allāh guided from amongst this nation until they became from the God-Fearing Friends of Allāh, the greatest reason for this was their supplicating to Allāh with this supplication (guide us to the Straight Path) in every prayer along with the knowledge of their continuous need of Allāh that He guide them on the Straight Path. So due to their continually saying this supplication and their acknowledging their continuous need of Him they became God-Fearing Friends of Allāh. Sahl bin 'Abdullāh at-Tustarī said, 'There is not route between a servant and Allāh closer to Him than need.'

The one who has attained guidance in the past is in need of guidance in the future, this is the real meaning behind the saying of those who say that it means: 'Establish us and guide us to being firm upon the Straight Path.'

The opinion of those who say that it means: 'Increase us in guidance' includes what has preceded. But all that has been stated refers to His guidance to the Straight Path that is to be granted in the future, for indeed action in the future is upon knowledge that is not yet attained. And the person is not considered to be one who is guided until he acts according to his knowledge in the future, but it is possible that this knowledge not be there in the future, rather it could be removed from the heart, and if it still be there it is also possible that it not be acted upon. Therefore all of mankind is in dire need of this supplication, this is why Allāh made it obligatory upon them in every prayer and they are not in need of any other supplication as they are of this one. When guidance is obtained to the Straight Path then help, provision and all of the happiness that the soul seeks are obtained [from Allāh]. Allāh knows best.¹⁹

Allāh commands His servants to supplicate,

رَبَّنَا لَا تُخْرِجْنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْنَا وَهَبْ
لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ﴿٦﴾

«Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us and grant us mercy from Yourself. Indeed You are the Bestower»

[Ālī 'Imrān (3): 8]

¹⁹ ibn Taymiyyah, 'Diseases of the Heart and their Cures' Eng. Trans., pp. 44-47. The original text is to be found in his *Majmū' Fatawā*, vol. 10, pp. 91-138 . [Dar as-Sunnah Publishers 2003]

Refer also to ibn 'Atiyyah, vol. 1, pg. 74-75; al-Baghawi, vol. 1, pg. 54; ibn Kathir, vol. 1; pg. 52, al-Ālusi, vol. 1, pg. 126

8.6 The Path of those whom You have favoured

After the servant has requested guidance to the Straight Path, Allāh then proceeds to clarify further what this Straight Path is, by pointing out those who traverse it, and this in turn is explained in greater detail in *Sūrah an-Nisā'*,

فَلَا وَرِبَّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

هُنَّئِي يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بِنَهْمَةٍ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا
 فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مَمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ۝

وَلَوْ أَنَا كَنَبِّنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْ أَفْتَلُو الْأَنْسُكُمْ أَوْ أَخْرُجُو اِنْ
 دِيرَكُمْ مَا أَعْلَمُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِنْهُمْ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَطَلُوا أَمَّا يُعَظِّمُونَ
 يَوْمَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَقْتِيَّةً ۝ وَإِذَا لَا يَتَّقِنُهُمْ بَنْ
 لَدُنَّا أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۝ وَلَهُمْ يَتَّهِمُونَ صَرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ۝

وَمَنْ يُطِيعَ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْفَقُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِمْ
 مِنَ الْأَنْيَثِينَ وَالصَّدَقَاتِ وَالشَّدَادِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَحَسْنَ
 أَوْلَئِكَ رَفِيقًا ۝

«But no by Your Lord! They cannot have faith until they make you [O Muḥammad] judge in all disputes between them and find in themselves no resistance to your decisions, and accept them with full submission. And if We had ordered them [saying]: ‘Kill [the guilty ones amongst] yourselves or leave your homes’ very few of them would have done it. If they had done what they were told, it

would have been better for them and would have strengthened their [faith]. Indeed we would then have bestowed upon them a great reward from Ourselves and we would have guided them to a Straight Way. And whosoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger, they will be in the company of those upon whom Allāh has bestowed His favour: the Prophets, the sincerely truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. What an excellent company these are!»

[*an-Nisā'* (4): 65-69]

Ibn ‘Abbās said in commentary to this verse,

[Those who you have favoured] by making them obedient to You and worship You from the Angels, the Prophets, the sincerely truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. This is like what our Lord, Exalted is He has said, “*They will be in the company of those upon whom Allāh has bestowed His favour: ...*”

Allāh, Exalted is He, also says,

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فِيهِدَنَاهُمْ أَفْتَأْلِهُ

«They are the ones Allāh has guided, so be guided by their guidance»

[*al-An‘ām* (6): 90]

In explaining to us the Straight Path by directing us to those who traverse it, lies an indication that we should be careful of the company we keep, this is a principle repeatedly taught to us by the Prophet (ﷺ),

A man is upon the religion of his close friend, so look

carefully as to who you take as your close friend.²⁰

The example of a good companion and a bad companion is like the seller of musk and the blacksmith. As for the seller of musk, either he will give some to you, or you will try and buy it from him, or its scent will rub off on you. As for the blacksmith, either your clothes will be burned or his rancid odour will rub off on you.²¹

A person will be with those he loves.²²

Moreover by directing our attention to those who traverse the Straight Path one is comforted and no longer feels lonely and isolated; for those traversing this Path, amongst man, are few. Some of the Salaf would say, 'Follow the path of truth and do not despair because of the few who traverse it, beware of the path of misguidance and do not be deceived by the many who traverse it.' So each time one feels isolated, look to those who have traversed the path before you, those who have been favoured, take comfort in that, keep your gaze directed at them, your desire being to aspire to their company, and let not your desire be distracted to other than them; for they can never bring you any benefit before Allāh.²³

This verse constitutes clear proof that the obedience of Allāh, Exalted is He, can only come about by Allāh favouring us and His

²⁰ at-Tirmidī #2378 and Abū Dāwūd #4813 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah. at-Tirmidī said it was ḥasan as did al-Albānī #3545, an-Nawawī, *Riyāḍ as-Ṣalibin* #371 said the isnād was ṣahīḥ.

²¹ Bukhārī #5534 and Muslim #2628 on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī

²² Bukhārī #6170 and Muslim #2641 on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī

²³ Ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 22

granting us His divine accord.²⁴ Allāh, Exalted is He says,

فَلِلّٰهِ الْمُسْرِفُ وَالْمُغْرِبُ يَهْدِی مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلٰی صِرَاطٍ
مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٦٧﴾

«Say: Both east and west belong to Allāh, He guides whoever He wills to a straight path»

[al-Baqarah (2): 143]

۶۷) كَانَ أَكَّلْ أُمَّةً وَجَدَهُ فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ الْأَنْبِيَّاً مُّبَشِّرِينَ
وَمُنذِّرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مِنْهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحُكُّمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ
فِيمَاخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَمَاخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُرْتَدُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَعْدًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهُدِيَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَمْنُوا
لِمَاخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ يَا ذَرْنَاهُ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلٰى
صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٦٧﴾

«Mankind was a single community. Then Allāh sent Prophets bringing good news and giving warning, and with them He sent down the Book with truth to decide between people regarding their differences. Only those who were given it differed about it, after clear signs had come to them, envying one another. Then, by His permission, Allāh guided those who had faith to the truth about which they differed. Allāh guides whoever He wills to a straight path»

[al-Baqarah (2): 213]

i.e. Allāh sent the Messengers with scripture, but the people

²⁴ at-Tabarī, vol. 1, pg. 107

starting differing over it by way of envy and obstinacy, so Allāh graced the believers and, "*guided those who had faith*", the ruling of truth came "*and Allāh guides whoever He wills to a straight path.*" In this respect Allāh, Exalted is He also says,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَعْلَمُ أَنَّكُمْ لَا تَعْمَلُونَ
إِنَّمَا يَعْلَمُ الْأَيْمَانَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
١٧

«They think they have done you a favour by becoming Muslims! Say, 'Do not consider your Islām a favour to me. No indeed! It is Allāh who has favoured you by guiding you to faith if you are telling the truth.'»

[*al-Ifrāq* (49): 17]

وَرَزَقْنَا مَا فِي حُصُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَلَى
فَجَرِيَ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ الْأَنْهَرُ وَقَالُوا لِلْمُسْدِلِ اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ أَنْتَ الْهَدَى
وَمَا كَانَ لِهِمْ إِلَّا أَنْ هَدَنَا أَنَّهُ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُشْدٌ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ
وَنَوْدُوا أَنْ يُلْكِمُ الْجَنَّةَ أَوْ يَشْمُوْهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ
٤٧

«...We will strip away rancour in their hearts. Rivers will flow under them and they will say, 'Praise be to Allāh who has guided us to this! We would not have been guided had Allāh not guided us. The Messengers of our Lord came with the truth.' It will be proclaimed to them, 'This is your Garden which you inherited for what you did.'»

[*al-A'raf* (7): 43]²⁵

This truth is emphasised by the explicit mention of '*You*' in the

²⁵ Sālim, vol. 1, pg. 24

phrase '**You have favoured.**' By the servant saying this, he is reminding himself that Allāh is the One who has blessed him with guidance and that Allāh is the One who should be thanked for this, as such he has combined the two aspects that are mentioned in,

فَاذْكُرُونِي
أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَأَشْكُرْهُوْلِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِي ﴿٢٦﴾

«Remember Me - I will remember You. Give thanks to Me and do not be ungrateful.»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 152]²⁶

at-Taftazānī ash-Shāfi‘ī said that this chapter directs us towards all favours that one is granted. All favours revolve around four matters: the first creation and continuation and the second creation and continuation in the Hereafter. "*All praise and thanks are due to Allāh, Lord of the world*" points one to the blessing of our own creation in this life. "*The All-Merciful, the Most Merciful*" points one to the blessings of Allāh that allow us to survive in this world. "*Master of the Day of Judgment*" points one to the second creation and "*You Alone we worship*" points us to the second continuation, for the benefits and blessings of worship are truly seen in the next life. There are four more chapters in the Qur’ān that commence with mention of praise, and all of these discuss one of these four blessings.²⁷

²⁶ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Bada‘t al-Fawā’id*, vol. 1, pp. 260

²⁷ al-Baqā‘ī, vol. 1, pg. 20. The four chapters being *al-An‘ām* (6), *al-Kahf* (18), *Saba‘* (35) and *Fātiḥ* (35)

8.7 Optimism in Supplication

By asking to be guided to the Path of those who have been favoured by Allāh, the servant is asking to be in the company of the best of creation, in this he is being optimistic in his supplication.²⁸ This is the state we are recommended to be in for the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) taught us,

When you supplicate, do not say, 'If You will'. Rather be resolute in your asking and let your longing be great, for nothing that Allāh grants is too great for Him.²⁹

Paradise has one hundred levels, the distance between each level is as the distance between heaven and earth. Firdaws is the highest level of Paradise and from it sprout its four rivers and above it is the Throne. So when you ask, ask for Firdaws.³⁰

²⁸ al-Baqā'ī, vol. 1, pg. 20

²⁹ Muslim #4838

³⁰ at-Tirmidhī #2531 and Aḥmad #22695 on the authority of 'Ubādah ibn as-Sāmit. It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī #4244

Similar ahādīth are recorded by at-Tirmidhī #2530 on the authority of Mu'ādh; al-Bazzār #3513, 3514 on the authority of Samurah; al-Bazzār #3512 on the authority of 'Irbad

8.8 Further observations

ash-Shanqītī makes the following additional observations concerning this verse:

1. The correctness of the *khalifate* of Abū Bakr as-Şiddīq (*radiy Allāhu 'anhu*) can be derived from this noble verse.

This is because he is included amongst those whom Allāh has commanded us, in the Great Qur'ān and the Seven Oft-Repeated Verses - I mean *al-Fātiḥah*, to ask Him that He guide us to their path; thus indicating that their path is the Straight Path.

This lies in His saying, "*Guide us to the Straight Path, the Path of those whom You have favoured*" and He explained who these favoured people were and included amongst them the *Siddiqin*. [The Messenger (ﷺ) explained that Abū Bakr (*radiy Allāhu 'anhu*) was from amongst the *Siddiqin*, so it becomes clear that he is included amongst those whom Allāh has favoured - those whom Allāh has commanded us to ask Him to guide us to their path. Therefore there remains no doubt that Abū Bakr as-Şiddīq was upon the Straight Path and that his *khilāfate* was correct.³¹

2. You have come to know that the *Siddiqīn* are from those whom Allāh has favoured and He has made clear that Maryam the daughter of 'Imrān was a *siddīqa* in His saying,

وَمَأْمُونَةٌ صَدِيقَةٌ

«...and his mother was a *siddīqa*»

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 75]

³¹ ibn 'Ādil, vol. 2, pg. 219; ar-Rāzī, vol. 1, pg. 221

So is Maryam included in His saying, "*Those whom you have favoured*" or not?

The answer: whether or not she is included amongst them is dependent upon a foundational principle that has a well-known dispute over it. This is: does the sound masculine plural and its likes that occur in the Qur'an and the Sunnah include the feminine gender in all cases or only in those cases for which there is specific evidence?

A group of scholars took to the opinion that it does - so according to them Maryam is included in the above verse. These scholars depended upon two proofs:

1. The consensus of the people of the Arabic Language that the masculine gender takes prevalence over the feminine.³²
2. There are a number of verses which prove that the females are included in the sound masculine plural, like His saying concerning Maryam herself,

وَصَدَقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُنْتِيْهِ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقَانِتِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

«She testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and His Books, and she was of those obedient to Allāh»³³

[*at-Târîm* (66): 12]

and His saying concerning the wife of al-'Azîz,

³² For example a mixed gathering of males and females would be referred to by using the male plural not the female plural even if there be more females than males.

³³ *Qânitîn* - a sound masculine plural

يُوشِّفَ أَغْرِضَ عَنْ
هَذَا وَاسْتَغْفِرِي لَذِلِكَ إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ

«O Yusuf! Turn away from this! [O Woman!] Ask forgiveness for your sin, indeed you were of the sinful»³⁴

[*Yusuf* (12): 29]

and His saying concerning Bilqis,

وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ

«And that which she used to worship besides Allāh has prevented her [from Islām], for she was of a disbelieving people»³⁵

[*an-Naml* (27): 43]

and His saying,

فَلَمَّا آتَيْنَاهُمْ بَيْتَهَا

«We said: get down³⁶ all of you from this»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 38]

this address includes Hawā' by consensus.

The majority of scholars, however, took to the opinion that the females are not included in the sound masculine plural unless there is specific evidence. They depended upon a number of verses like His sayings,

³⁴ *Khāfiḍin* - a sound masculine plural

³⁵ *Qawmin Kāfirin*

³⁶ *ibbiṭū*

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
 وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْمُتَدَبِّرِاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالْمُعْذِلِينَ
 وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالْخَلِيلِينَ وَالْخَيْرَاتِ وَالْمُنَاصِدِقِينَ
 وَالْمُنَاصِدِقَاتِ وَالصَّاهِرِينَ وَالصَّاهِرَاتِ وَالْمُحْفَظِينَ
 فَرُوْجُهُمْ وَالْحَفَاظَتِ وَالذَّكِيرَاتِ اللَّهُ كَثِيرًا
 وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعْذَدَ اللَّهُ هُنَّ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمًا ﴿٧٦﴾

«Indeed the male Muslims and the female Muslims, the male believers and the female believers...Allāh has prepared for them a forgiveness and a great reward»

[al-Abzāb (33): 35]

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَعْضُوا مِنْ أَبْصَرِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ
 ذَلِكَ أَزَكٌ لَّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَيْرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١﴾

«Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and protect their private parts. That is purer for them...»

[an-Nūr (24): 30]

following this with,

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
 يَعْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَرِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ

«...and tell the believing women to lower their gaze and protect their private parts»

[an-Nūr (24): 31]

So their following the mention of men indicates that they are not included amongst them. They replied to the proponents of the first opinion by saying that the fact that the masculine gender takes prevalence over the feminine is not a matter of dispute. What is disputed is whether the masculine plural includes the females in every case. They further replied to the verses [used by the first group] by saying that it is known by the context of these verses and their meanings that the females are included in the male plural - and that their inclusion in the male plural in the case of their being an evidence for this is not contended.

So according to this opinion, Maryam is not included in the verse.³⁷

8.9 The position of this verse and Summary

After asking Allāh for help, the servant then proceeds to mention the greatest matter for which he is need of help, guidance to, and on, the Straight Path.³⁸ We are told that guidance to this Straight Path cannot occur unless Allāh favours us, "*the Path of those You have favoured*" and that this path lies in firmly adhering to what the Messengers came with.³⁹

This verse also refutes the Qadariyyah, Mu'tazilah and the Imāmiyyah because in their view, the desire of a person is sufficient in his being able to do whatever he wants, because man is the creator of his own actions, hence he is no need of aid from His Lord in this. This verse proves this opinion is wrong in that Allāh has obli-

³⁷ ash-Shanqītī, vol. 1, pg. 33-35

³⁸ al-Baydāwi, vol. 1, pg. 69; al-Ālūsi, vol. 1, pg. 126

³⁹ al-Baqā'ī, vol. 1, pg. 18

gated that we ask Him to guide us to the actions of those who traverse the straight path, and that we repeat this request in every unit of every prayer. If the affair was truly in the hands of the person himself, as they claim, there would be no need for this supplication.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ at-Tabari, vol. 1, pg. 103; al-Qurtubi, vol. 1, pg. 104

CHAPTER IX

غَيْرُ
الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿١﴾

Not [the path] of those who
have earned [Your] anger, nor those
who have gone astray

9.1 The meaning of *ghadab* and *dalāl*

al-Ghadab linguistically means anger, it is the opposite of pleasure (*ridā*) and one of the Attributes of Allāh.¹ *Maghdūb* refer to the objects of anger.

Dalāl linguistically means to divert from the intended goal or to diverge from the true path and it is the opposite of guidance. Its essential meaning is disintegration and dissolution,² as such it is

¹ al-Ālusi, vol.1, pp. 129

² Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 148; al-Ālusi, vol.1, pp. 129

said 'the milk *dalla* in the water' when it is mixed such that it disappears. In this respect also is His saying,

وَقَالُوا إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

«And they say: when we become *talal* in the earth
are we then to be in a new creation?»

[as-Sajdah (32): 10]

Meaning when we die and disappear into the earth by becoming dust. *ad-Dallin* refers to those gone astray.³

9.2 Who does this verse refer to?

at-Tirmidhi records on the authority of 'Adī bin Hātim who said,

I asked the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ about Allāh's saying about, "Those who have earned [Your] anger", and He said, "It refers to the Jews." I then asked about, "Those who have gone astray" and he said, "The Christians are those who have gone astray."⁴

The Jews and the Christians, even though both of them are misguided and both of them have Allāh's anger on them, the anger is specified to the Jews because the Jews knew the truth, rejected it and deliberately came with falsehood. Therefore the anger of Allāh being upon them was the description most befitting them. The Christians were ignorant, not knowing the truth, so misguidance was the description most befitting them.

³ ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 25

⁴ Reported by at-Tirmidhi #2953, 2954 and Ahmad #19381. It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Ḥibbān #6246, 7206, 7365 and al-Albānī #8202

Refer also to at-Tabārī, vol. 1, pp. 110-111, 113-115; as-Suyūtī, vol. 1, pp. 42-43

This is further proven by the sayings of Allāh concerning the Jews,

فَبِأَنَّهُمْ يَعْصِيُونَ اللَّهَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ

«So they have drawn on themselves anger upon anger»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 90]

**مَلِكٌ
هَلْ أَنْتُمْ كُمْ بِشَرِّيْنِ ذَلِكَ مَثْوَيْهِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ لَعْنَةِ اللَّهِ وَغَنْوْسَبَ
عَلَيْهِ**

«Say: shall I inform you of something worse than that, regarding the recompense from Allāh: those (Jews) who incurred the curse of Allāh and His anger»

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 60]

**إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَخْذَلُوا
الْعِجْلَ سَيَّئَاتُهُمْ عَصَبَّتْ قَرْبَتِهِمْ وَذَلَّةً**

«Indeed those who took the calf (for worship), anger from their Lord and humiliation will come upon them»

[*al-A'raf* (7): 152]

and Allāh said concerning the Christians,

**مَلِكٌ يَأْهَلُ الْعَكَبَيْنِ لَا تَقْتُلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ
وَلَا تَتَبَيَّنُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلَّوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَمْسَلُوا
سَكِّينَيْرَا وَضَلَّوْا عَنْ سَوَّادِ السَّكِّيلِ ۝**

«...And do not follow the vain desires of people (i.e. the Christians) who went astray in times gone by, and misled many, and have themselves strayed from the Straight Path»

[*al-Mâ'idah* (5): 77]

Other opinions have been voiced concerning the meaning of this verse,⁵ but the meaning mentioned above takes precedence and is undoubtedly correct as it has been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) himself.⁶

9.3 The position of the verse in the *Sûrah* and Summary

It is by their opposites that things become clear, and hence we are taught about the Straight Path from the perspective of those who traverse it and then from the perspective of those who do not.⁷ Punishment and vengeance, the consequences of anger, is the opposite of favour and grace. It is for this reason that “*Those who have earned [Your] anger*” is mentioned first, directly after the mention of favour, and then “*Those who have gone astray*”.⁸

Consider carefully the succinctness in which Allâh has mentioned the cause and resulting recompense for each of the three groups in this verse. Allâh’s favouring a people includes guiding them which

⁵ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Baddâ'i al-Fawâ'id*, vol. 1, pp. 269-270; ash-Shanqîti, vol. 1, pg. 35

⁶ Abû Hayyân, vol. 1, pg. 151; al-Âlûsi, vol. 1, pg. 130

⁷ al-Baqâ'i, vol. 1, pg. 18; ibn Taymiyyah, vol. 10, pp. 301-302

⁸ Abû Hayyân, vol. 1, pg. 152; al-Âlûsi, vol. 1, pg. 130; Ibn al-Qayyim, *Baddâ'i al-Fawâ'id*, vol. 1, pp. 273

in turn comprises beneficial knowledge and righteous actions, it also includes them being granted the best and most complete of rewards; "You have favoured" includes both matters. "Those who have earned [Your] anger" also comprises two matters: the recompense of anger which necessarily leads to punishment and disgrace; and also the cause for this anger, for Allāh is too merciful and kind to be angry at one who does not deserve it, also from the consequences of His anger is one's being misguided. "Those who have gone astray" necessary leads to His being angry at them and their deserving punishment. So the cause behind each group and their recompense has been mentioned in the most concise and eloquent way possible.⁹

This verse also contains an encouragement towards studying history, for it is through history that we will learn of the Jews and Christians, of the believers and the ends of their opponents.¹⁰ Allah, Exalted is He says,

وَلَقَدْ أَسْتَهِنُ يُرْسَلُ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ
بِالظَّالِمِينَ سَخْرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهِنُونَ ۚ ۱۱
فَلْ يَسْرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ انْظُرُوهُ أَكْيَفُهُ كَانُوا عَدْيَةً
ۚ الْمُكَذِّبُونَ ۱۲

«Already were the Messengers mocked before you, but those who jeered were engulfed by what they mocked. Say: travel about the earth and see the final fate of the deniers»

[al-An'ām (6): 10-11]

⁹ ibn al-Qayyim, pg 13

¹⁰ Rashīd Rūdā, vol. 1, pg. 60. See also ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kamil fi-t-Tarikh*, vol. 1, pp. 7-9

أَوْلَمْ يَرَوْا كَيْفَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ
يُبَدِّلُهُ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِيزَانٌ ۝ قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقُ ثُمَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّسِعَاتِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٦﴾

«Have they not considered how Allāh brings creation out of nothing, then reproduces it? That is easy for Allāh. Say: travel about the earth and see how He brought creation out of nothing. Then later will Allāh bring about the next existence»

[al-'Ankabut (29): 19-20]

9.4 A means of displaying good manners

It is important to note that in this verse when the blessings of Allāh have been mentioned they have been mentioned in the second person such that Allāh is directly referred to, "The path of those whom You have favoured." However when the anger or punishment of Allāh is mentioned it is mentioned in the third person such that Allāh is not directly referred to, "Not the path of those who have earned [Your] anger, nor of those who have gone astray." This even though He is the One in reality who is angry with them, and He is the One by whose decree they were misguided as proven by His sayings,¹¹

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَيَّ الَّذِينَ قَوْلُوا فَمَا غَبَّ بِاللَّهِ

«Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry»

[al-Mujādilah (58): 14]

¹¹ ibn Kathir, vol. 1, pg. 55

مَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَكَلَّا
هَادِيٌ لَهُ وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانٍ يَمْهُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

«Whoever Allāh sends astray - there is no guide for him and He leaves them in their transgression, wandering blindly»

[al-A'raf (7): 186]

and other verses proving that guidance and misguidance is the sole responsibility of Allāh.¹²

This is a method that is used throughout the Qur'aan and it is a way of showing respect to Allāh and not attributing evil to Him as well as showing how belittled such people are. This was clearly expressed in the supplication of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ when he said,

I am completely at Your service and doing all I can to please You. All good is in Your hands and evil does not pertain to You.¹³

Ibn al-Qayyim explains this ḥadīth and this concept further,

The meaning of this ḥadīth is far greater and wider than the [explanations presented by some saying that it means], 'evil does not come close to you' or 'evil [deeds] are not raised to you.' This is because these explanations only serve to absolve Him of any evil coming close to Him or evil [deeds] being raised to him, however they

¹² For more detail and explanation of decree (*qaḍīr*) refer to the book 'Fate in Islaam' by Dr. Saalih as-Saalih.

¹³ Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 373 #1695

do not explicitly absolve Him of evil with regards His Essence, Attributes and Actions. This is not the full purport of the words of the Truthful One, the one entrusted and preserved from error for his ﷺ words absolve Him of any evil whatsoever being linked to His Essence, Attributes and Actions. However it is possible that evil be contained in His creation as occurs in His words,

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ① مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ②

«Say: I take refuge with the Lord of Daybreak. From the evil of what He created»

[*al-Falaq* (113): 1-2]

Contemplate the style of the Qur'ān and see how sometimes it adjoins evil to its cause and those who enact it such as His sayings,

وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ①

«The disbelievers are [truly] the oppressors and wrong-doers»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 254]

وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ①

«And Allāh does not guide a sinful, rebellious people»

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 108]

فَيُظْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَذْنَى كَمَا دُوا
حَرَّمَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَبَيْبَتْ أَجْلَتْ لَمْ

«For the wrongdoing on the part of the Jews, We

made unlawful for them [certain] foods that had previously been lawful for them»

[*an-Nisa'* (4): 160]

سَأَنْهِي فِي عَنْهُ إِنْقِزَ الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ

«That was Our recompense for their transgression»

[*al-An'am* (6): 146]

وَمَا أَغْلَقْنَا لَهُمْ وَلِكُنْ كَثُرُوا مِمَّا لَطَّلَبُوكُنْ ﴿٦﴾

«We did no injustice to them, rather it was they who were unjust, wrong-doers»

[*az-Zukhruf* (43): 76]

Sometimes the subject [of the sentence] is omitted as in His sayings,

وَإِنَّا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرُّ أُرْبَدٍ
يُسَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ رَبُّهُمْ رُشْدًا ﴿١٧﴾

«And we do not know whether evil is intended for those who are on the earth, or whether their Lord desires guidance for them»

[*al-Finn* (72): 10]

This verse omits the one who intends the evil but explicitly states the one who intends good. In a similar vein is His saying,

صِرَاطُ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ
عَلَيْهِمْ عَنِ الْمَقْضَبِ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا أَكَالَيْنَ ﴿٧﴾

«...The path of those whom You have favoured, not the path of those who have earned [Your] anger nor those who have gone astray»

[*al-Fātiḥah* (1): 7]

Hence He mentioned the favour adjoined to Himself, misguidance adjoined to those who committed it and omitted the enactor of the anger. Likewise is the saying of Khidr with regards the ship,

فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِسَّهَا

«So I wished to cause a defect in it»

[*al-Kahf* (18): 79]

And his saying with regards the orphans,

فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَلْفَّهَا
أَشَدَّ هُمَّا وَتَسْخِيرًا كَثُرَّ هُمَّا رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَبِّكَ

«So your Lord intended that they reach maturity and then extract their treasure as a mercy from your Lord»

[*al-Kahf* (18): 82]

Likewise is His saying,

وَلَدِكَنَ اللَّهُ حَبِّبَ إِلَيْكُمْ إِلَيْسَنَ وَرِسْمَهُ فَلُوكِنَ وَكَرَهَ إِلَيْكُمْ
الْكُفْرُ وَالْمُسْرُقَ وَالْعُصْبَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ ﴿٦﴾

«Allāh has endeared faith for you and made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, disobedience and sins»

[*al-Iṣrā'īl* (49): 7]

رُبِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الْشَّهَوَاتِ

«Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire»

[*Āli 'Imrān* (3): 14]

omitting the one who made it beautiful for them.
[Ibrāhīm] al-Khalil (رض) said,

اللَّهُو خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِنِي ﴿١﴾ وَاللَّهُو يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِنِي
وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِي نِّي ﴿٢﴾ وَاللَّهُو يُمْسِكُنِي ثُمَّ
يُجِيئِنِي ﴿٣﴾ وَاللَّهُو أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيشَ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

«It is He who created me and it is He who guides me. It is He who feeds me and gives me to drink. When I am ill it is He who cures me. It is He who will cause me to die and then bring me back to life. I hope that He will forgive me my sin on the Day of Recompense»

[*ash-Shu'arā'* (26): 77-82]

So he attributed all aspects of perfection to Him in these actions but attributed to himself any [seeming] deficiency - this being illness and sin.

We have explained this matter in depth in our book, *al-Fawā'id al-Makkīyah* and I have explained there the difference between the sayings of Allāh,

مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ

«Those who have been given the Book»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 101]

And His sayings,

الَّذِينَ مَا تَبَرَّأُوا مِنَ الْكِتَابِ

«Those to whom We have given the Book»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 121]

Saying that He mentioned Himself explicitly in those contexts in which He praises [the People of the Book] but omits His mention in those places that He censures them. This then, is one of the secrets of the [literary style] of the Qur'ān.

Exactly the same applies to His sayings,

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ أَصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا

«Then We caused to inherit the Scripture those We have chosen of Our servants»

[*al-Fatir* (35): 32]

وَلِلَّذِينَ

أُرْثُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لِئَلَّا شَكَّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٌ ⑯

«Indeed those who were granted inheritance of the Scripture after them are in disquieting doubt concerning it»

[*asb-Shura* (42): 14]

فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ
وَرَثُوا الْكِتَابَ يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا الْأَرْضِ

«And there followed them successors who inherited the Scripture while taking unlawful gains and pleasures in this lower life»

[*al-A'rāf* (7): 169]

Therefore in conclusion only the good, wisdom and benefit is adjoined to Allāh, Exalted is He, whereas evil does not pertain to him.¹⁶

This verse also contains yet another indication that the mercy of Allāh precedes His wrath, this is because to favour one is to display goodness and mercy to that person, to be angry leads to his being punished in a just fashion, hence the mercy is directly linked to Allāh and the anger is abstracted. It is also said that another reason for the verse being phrased in this way is that Allāh Alone is the One who grants blessings and favours, but as for being angry at His enemies, not only is He angry but His Angels, Prophets and *Awliya'* become angry when He becomes angry.¹⁵

¹⁴ ibn al-Qayyim, *Bada'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pp. 454-455 and pp.256-260

¹⁵ ibn al-Qayyim, pp. 12

CHAPTER X

The Saying of *Āmin* After Reciting *al-Fātiḥah*

It is recommended for the one reciting the Qur'ān to say *Āmin* after having recited *al-Fātiḥah* and after a short pause upon completing the word "dāllīn" so as to differentiate between that which is the Qur'ān and that which is not.¹

The meaning of *Āmin* in the eyes of the majority is, 'O Allāh respond to our supplication.' Maqātil said that it gives strength to the supplication and is a cause for the descent of blessings.² 'Alī (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said, '*Āmin* is the seal of the Lord of the worlds, it is with it that His servants seal their supplications.'³

In *Sūrat Yūnus* the following supplication of Mūsā (*alayhi-salām*) is mentioned,

¹ al-Baghawī, vol. 1, pg. 55; al-Qurtubī, vol. 1, pg. 89; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 55; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 131

² al-Qurtubī, vol. 1, pg. 90; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 56

³ ibn 'Ayyāsh, vol. 1, pg. 79

وَقَالَكَ مُوسَى

رَبِّنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَأَ زِينَةً وَأَنْوَلَ كَفِيفَةً
 الْذُّنْيَارَ بَنَانِي صَلَوَاعَنْ سَبِيلَكَ رَبِّنَا طَمِينَ عَلَى أَنْوَلَهُمْ
 وَأَنْشَدَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوا حَقَّنِي بِرَوْا العَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٤٩﴾
 قَالَ قَدْ أَجِبْتَ دَعْوَتَكَ مَا فَاسِقَيْمَا وَلَا نَتَعَانَ سَبِيلَ
 الظَّرِيفَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

«Mūsā said, ‘O Lord! You have indeed bestowed splendour and wealth upon Pharaoh and his chiefs in the life of this world, our Lord! That they may lead men astray from Your path. Our Lord! Destroy their wealth and harden their hearts so that they will not believe until they see the painful torment.’ Allāh said, ‘Verily the supplication of you both is answered...’»

[Yūnus (10): 88-89]

In the commentary to this verse it is stated that Mūsā was saying the supplication and Hārūn was saying *Amin* and hence he was considered to be amongst the supplicants.⁴

al-Hakīm at-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir al-Usūl* records on the authority of Anas bin Mālik (*radī Allāhu 'anhu*) that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

Allāh has given my nation three things that were not given to any nation before them: The *salām*, which is the greeting of the inhabitants of Paradise; the rows of the

⁴ As stated by Abū al-'Āliyah, Abū Sālih, 'Ikrimah, Muhammād ibn Ka'b and ar-Rabi' ibn Anas; Ibn Kathīr, vol. 2, pg. 565; al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 90

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Angels; and the *Āmīn*, which was only previously given to Mūsā and Hārūn.⁵

Ibn Mājah also reports on the authority of ‘Ā’ishah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

The Jews do not envy you for anything as much as they envy you for saying the *salām* and *Āmīn*.⁶

Abū Dāwūd reports on the authority of Abū Miṣbah al-Maqrānī that he said,

We were sitting with Abū Zuhayr an-Numayrī who was one of the Companions and his speech used to be the most beautiful speech. Whenever a person from amongst us supplicated he would say, ‘Complete it by saying *Āmīn* for indeed *Āmīn* is like the seal on a scroll.’

Abū Zuhayr said, ‘Shall I not inform you about this? We left with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) one night and we came upon a person who was persistently and actively [supplicating] for something. The Prophet (ﷺ) stood listening to him. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “It will definitely be answered if he completes it.” A man from amongst the people [present] asked, ‘With what should he complete it?’ He replied, “By saying *Āmīn* for if he completes it by saying *Āmīn* it will definitely be answered.” So the man who asked turned away and went to the supplicant and said, “O so-and-so! Complete [your sup-

⁵ al-Qurtubī, vol. 1, pg. 90; as-Suyūtī, vol. 1, pg. 44

⁶ ibn Mājah #856. al-Buṣayrī said its isnād was ṣaḥīḥ and it was declared so by ibn Khuzaymah; al-Manāwī, vol. 5, pg. 562, and al-Albānī #5613

It is also recorded on the authority of ibn ‘Abbās by ibn Mājah #857 with a ḥaḍīf isnād as per al-Buṣayrī and as-Suyūtī, vol. 1, pg. 44

plication] and rejoice.”⁷

With regards to prayer, Muslim records on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (*radī Allāhu 'anhu*) that he said,

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) addressed us and explained to us our Sunnah [that we should follow] and explained to us [the method of performing] our prayer. He said, “When you pray, straighten your rows and let one of you lead you. When he says the *takbir* then say the *takbir*, when he says, “*Not [the path] of those who have earned [Your] anger nor those who have gone astray*” then say *Āmin* and Allāh will respond to you.”⁸

Abū Hurayrah (*radī Allāhu 'anhu*) reports on the authority of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) that he said,

When the Imām says *Āmin* then say *Āmin* for indeed the one whose *Āmin* coincides with the *Āmin* of the Angels will have his previous [minor] sins forgiven.⁹

So this hadīth shows that ones previous sins will be forgiven if four conditions are met:

1. The Imām saying *Āmin*.
2. The follower saying *Āmin*.
3. The Angels saying *āmin*.
4. The statements coinciding¹⁰

⁷ Sunan Abū Dāwūd Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 239 #938. as Suyū̄, vol. 1, pg. 44 said the isnād was ḥasan but it was declared da'if by al-Albānī #2111

⁸ Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 221 #800

⁹ Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 225 #809

¹⁰ al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 89

CHAPTER XI

Conclusions

11.1 *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* is a Cure for the Diseases of the Heart and the Body

The disease of the heart occurs due to two basic matters:

- One.* The corruption of knowledge
- Two.* The corruption of intent.

These in turn lead to two fatal illnesses: misguidance and anger, misguidance being the end result of the corruption of knowledge and anger being the end result of the corruption of intent. These two illnesses are the lords of all the diseases of the heart.

When one asks for guidance to the Straight Path, he is asking for that which will cure the disease of misguidance. This is why this *Sūrah* has been made obligatory upon every servant in every prayer.

Actualising the verse, "*You Alone we worship and You Alone we ask for help*" serves as a cure for the corruption of intent. This is because the intent is linked to the objectives and means of attaining them. Therefore this cure is composed of six matters:

- One.* Worshipping Allāh Alone
- Two.* By performing what He commanded and legislated
- Three.* Not by following ones own desires
- Four.* Neither by following the mere opinions of people
- Five.* By asking Allāh for His help to enact this
- Six.* And not relying on oneself

Furthermore the heart is beset with two dangerous and destructive diseases and this verse serves as a cure for them. Ibn Taymiyyah said,

"You Alone we worship" represses ostentation and *"You Alone we ask for help"* represses arrogance.¹

As regards its curing the bodily illnesses, this can be seen in the ḥadīth of Abū Sa'īd recorded by Bukhārī that after he had recited it to cure a person who had been bitten by a scorpion, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said to him,

...and what made you to know that it was a *rugyd*?²

¹ ibn al-Qayyim, pp. 46-48, the quote can be found in ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' Fatawā*, vol. 10, pg. 277

² This discussion is summarised from ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Salikin*, vol. 1, pp. 64-66

11.2 *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* Comprises a Refutation of Many of the Principle Innovations

From the amazing qualities of *al-Fātiḥah* is that despite its few words, it contains a refutation of many principle innovations. This can be seen generally in the statement, "*Guide us to the Straight Path*" for the Straight Path refers to the truth and giving this truth preference over ones desires. This truth is embodied in the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the way of the Companions. Any departure from this way is most definitely misguidance.

Specifically we see that *al-Fātiḥah*:

1. Establishes the need for Prophethood

This can be seen from His words, "*Lord of the worlds*," for it does not befit One with such a description that He leave His creation wondering aimlessly, without guidance.

It can also be seen from His words, "*Master of the Day of Judgement*," for this is the Day on which the servants will be judged for their deeds - punished for their transgressions and rewarded for their obedience. However they are in need of knowing what obedience and disobedience is.

It can also be seen from His saying, "*You Alone we worship*," for worship consists only of that which Allāh loves and is pleased with. The servants have no way of knowing this except through the Prophets.

It can also be seen from His words, "*Guide us to the Straight Path*," for guidance consists of clarification followed by the divine accord

to enact it. This requires Prophets.

2. It refutes the proponents of *Wahdatu-l-Wujūd* (Unity of Being)

Those who state that there is no distinction between the created and Creator, that the servant is the Lord, that there is no King and subjects, that there is no worshipper and worshipped etc... This *Sūrah* refutes this heresy from beginning to end in words that are too clear to require further explanation.

3. It refutes the *Majūs* and the *Qaderiyyah*.

Those who, in effect, affirm two lords. Those who state that their actions have no link to the *qadr* of Allāh, that actions are not created and that they arise by the complete free will of the servants. This implies that Allāh is not the Lord over their actions and as such the affirmation of Lordship in this *Sūrah* refutes them.

In the words, “*You Alone we ask for help*” also lies a clear refutation of this heresy, for by saying these words we are seeking help in performing that which must be under His control and authority.

4. It refutes the *Jahmiyyah* (those who deny the Attributes of Allāh)

This can be seen in our praising Him for praise necessitates the affirmation of everything that He is praised for such as His Perfect Attributes.

Also it affirms the Attribute of mercy and this further includes affirmation of Attributes that are necessary for this to exist such as life, will, ability/power, hearing and seeing.

It also affirms the Lordship of Allāh which in turn necessitates the affirmation of His Actions. Similarly it affirms the Godship of

Allāh and this necessitates the affirmation of Perfect descriptions both of His Essence as well as Actions.

5. It refutes those who worship others besides Allāh

This can clearly be seen in the words, "*You Alone we worship and You Alone we ask for help*"

It can also be seen in the words, "Guide us to the Straight Path" for this is the path of those who have actualised *Tawhid*.

6. It refutes the *Jabariyyah* (those who say that man is coerced).

This can be seen in our praising Him for this necessitates that He would not punish His servants for that which they have no choice in or something that is beyond their ability.

This can also been understood in the affirmation of His mercy and in the affirmation of worship and its attribution to the servants, "*we worship*".

7. It refutes those who say that the creation is eternal

This can be seen in our praising Him, for this necessarily implies the affirmation of His Actions.

It can also be seen in the affirmation of His Lordship over the 'ālam which, as has preceded, is everything besides Allāh. Hence the creation is subjugated by a Lord (*marbiū*) and anything that is subjugated must necessarily be created. Something that is created must have come into existence at some time.

It can also be seen in the affirmation of His *Tawhid* for this ne-

cessitates that none of His creation share in any of His specific qualities of Lordship.

8. It refutes the *Rāfiḍah*.

This lies in *al-Fātiḥah* dividing mankind into three categories: those who have been favoured, those who have earned anger and those who have been misguided. The first category are those who traverse the Straight Path, who follow the truth and there is no doubt that the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) fit this description better than the *Rawāfiḍah*. It is impossible that the Companions be ignorant of the truth yet the *Rawāfiḍah* know it, or that the Companions reject it and they take to it!

Furthermore we see the actions and resulting consequences of these two groups showing us who is upon the truth. We see the Companions conquering the lands of the disbelievers and making them the lands of Islām and we see them conquering the hearts by the Qur'ān, correct knowledge and guidance.

However we see the opposite effects in the *Rawāfiḍah* in every time and place, and history is the greatest testimony to this - how they aided the enemies of Islām against the Muslim. How many tragedies amongst the Muslims they were guilty of perpetrating, how many *Masjid* were desecrated and Qur'ānic texts burnt on account of them, and how many Muslims and their scholars were killed due to them.

It is due to this that the Straight Path has been explained by some to be the way of Abū Bakr and 'Umar as has preceded.³

³ This whole section is taken from ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Salikin*, vol. 1, pp. 69-84 summarised.

11.3 *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* Comprises the Meaning of the Entire Qur'ān

As alluded to earlier, *al-Fātiḥah* is named the Mother of the Qur'ān because it succinctly summarises the whole of the Qur'ān. We are now in a position to analyse this statement further.

- The *Sūrah* includes affirmation of *Tawhid* in all of its various categories,⁴
- 1. *Tawhid ar-Rubūbiyyah*, meaning unity of Allāh's Lordship, contained in His saying, "*Lord of the worlds*."
- 2. *Tawhid al-Ulūhiyyah*, meaning unity of Allāh's worship in that all worship is to be done sincerely for His sake Alone, contained in His saying, "*You Alone we worship and Your aid Alone we seek*."
- 3. *Tawhid al-Asmā' wa-s-Sifāt*, meaning the unity of Allāh's Names and Attributes in that they are perfect and unique to Him, contained in His saying, "*all praise and thanks are due to Allāh*."
- It teaches us to praise and glorify Allāh by mentioning His beautiful and perfect Names and Attributes.
- It teaches us about His mercy and His justice.
- It teaches us about the Day of Judgement and about the recompense of our deeds.

⁴ Siddiq Hasan Khān, *ad-Dīn al-Khālibī*, vol. 1, pp. 7+, mentions thirty ways in which this Sūrah emphasises *Tawhid*.

- It teaches us that the recompense will be established upon perfect justice.
- It encourages one to perform righteous actions and dissuades one from performing sins.
- It teaches us to ask of Him Alone, to humble ourselves before Him and worship Him Alone and to put our trust and reliance in Him Alone.
- It teaches us to ask Allāh continuously for guidance to the Straight Path.
- It points us towards the nations of the past and warns us against falling into the same acts of transgression and misguidance that they were guilty of.
- It teaches us to aspire to the company of the sincerely truthful, the martyrs and the righteous.
- It teaches that there is nothing in the Qur'ān that would give aid to or encourage innovation. Hence never will the innovator be able to find evidence for his misguidance in the Qur'ān.⁵

al-Fātiḥah is a supplication that Allāh teaches us to say with the purpose of attaining right guidance in this life and then next. Its place at the beginning of the Qur'ān signifies that we are supposed to read the Book with the aim of discovering right guidance and following it. As such this opening Sūrah is like an introduction and summary of the Qur'ān, its relationship is that of petition and re-

⁵ ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 5; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 55

sponse. Man asks for right guidance, and the rest of the Qur'ān is the answer to that request.

*And all praise and thanks
are due to Allāh, the Lord
of the worlds.*

Biographies

The Companions

'A'ishah: bint Abū Bakr as-Šiddīq, the Mother of the Believers and most beloved wife of the Prophet (ﷺ). She reported many *ahādīth* from the Prophet and many Companions and Successors reported from her. She died in the year 58H.

'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās: bin 'Abdul-Muṭtalib bin Hāshim bin 'Abd Munāf al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī, the cousin of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the interpreter of the Qur'an. He was born three years before the *Hijrah* and was called the 'Ocean of knowledge' due to his vast knowledge. He took part in the *Jihād* in North Africa in the year 27H and died in the year 68H.

'Abdullāh bin 'Amr: bin al-'Ās bin Wā'il bin Hāshim bin Su'ayd bin Sa'd bin Sahl as-Sahlī. He and his father were Companions. He was literate and attained permission from the Prophet (ﷺ) to write everything he said. He died in the year 65H.

'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd: bin Ghāfil bin Ḥabīb al-Hadhlī Abū 'Abdur-Rahmān. One of the scholars amongst the Companions and he witnessed *Badr* and the following battles. He had many virtues and died in the year 32H.

Abdullāh bin 'Umar: bin al-Khaṭṭāb al-'Adawī, Abū 'Abdur-Rahmān, the noble Companion and scholar. He reported many *ahādīth* from the Messenger (ﷺ) and died in the year 73H.

Abdur-Rahmān bin Awf: bin Awf bin Abd Awf bin al-Hārith al-Qurashī az-Zuhri, Abū Muhammad, one of the ten promised Paradise. He migrated to Abyssinia on both occasions and witnessed every battle with the Prophet (ﷺ). He was very rich and very generous when giving in the Way of Allāh. He died in the year 32H.

Abū Bakr as-Siddīq: 'Abdullāh bin 'Uthmān bin Āmir al-Qurashi. The first *Khalīfah* of the Messenger (ﷺ), his companion in the cave, his closest friend and one of the ten promised Paradise. He was the first man to accept Islām and died in the year 13H.

Abū ad-Dardā': Uwaymir bin Mālik bin Zayd bin Qays al-Khazrajī al-Anṣārī. There is a difference of opinion concerning his name. He accepted Islām on the day of *Badr* and witnessed *Uhud*. He was from the Legal Jurists and ascetics of the Companions. He died in the year 32H.

Abū Dharr al-Ghbārī: Jundub bin Junādah bin Sakn, he was of those who accepted Islām early on but delayed his migration and hence did not witness *Badr*. His virtues are many and he died in the year 32H.

Abū Hurayrah: 'Abdur-Rahmān bin Ṣakhr ad-Dusī. His name is greatly differed over. He accepted Islām in the year 7H and reported the most *ḥadīth* from the Prophet (ﷺ). He died in the year 59H.

Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī: 'Abdullāh bin Qays bin Salīm. He had a beautiful recitation and was one of the scholars amongst the Companions. He died in the year 42H or 44H.

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī: Sa'd bin Mālik bin Sinān bin 'Ubaid al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī. He and his father were both Companions and he witnessed all the battles that followed *Utbud*. He was one of the scholars amongst the Companions and reported many *abādīth* from the Messenger (ﷺ). He died in the year 74H.

Abū 'Ubaidah bin al-Jarrāḥ: 'Āmir bin 'Abdullāh bin al-Jarrāḥ bin Hilāl al-Qurashī al-Fahrī, one of the ten promised Paradise. He accepted Islām early on and witnessed the battle of *Badr* and the following battles. He is the trustworthy one of this nation and died as a martyr due to a plague in the year 18H at the age of fifty-eight.

'Adī bin Ḥātim: bin 'Abdullāh bin Sa'd bin al-Hashraj bin 'Amr al-Qays at-Tā'l, Abu Ṭarīf. He was a Christian who accepted Islām and witnessed the battles of *al-Jamāl*, *Sīfīn* and *an-Nabrawān* with 'Alī. He died in the year 68H.

'Alī bin Abī Tālib: bin 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib bin Hāshim al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī, the fourth Rightly Guided *Khalifah* and one of ten promised Paradise. He accepted Islām at the age of thirteen and was famous for his chivalry, bravery and knowledge. He married Fātimah, the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ) and was martyred in the year 40H.

Amr bin al-'Ās: bin Wā'il al-Qurashī as-Sahmī. He accepted Islām during the year of *Hudaybiyyah* and was the one who conquered Egypt. He died in the year 43H.

Anas bin Mālik: bin an-Nadar bin Dāmādān al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī, the servant of the Messenger (ﷺ). He witnessed *Badr* but was not of age to actually participate. He died in the year 93H.

Jābir bin 'Abdullāh: bin 'Amr bin Ḥarrām al-Anṣārī as-Sulamī, he wit-

nessed the second pledge at 'Uqbah while he was still a child. It is said that he witnessed *Badr* and *Uhud* and he reported many *ahādīth* from the Messenger (ﷺ). He died in the year 74H.

Kbālid bin al-Walid: bin al-Mughīrah al-Makhzūmī al-Qurashī Abū Sulaymān. He was a great warrior and military leader and was given the nickname, 'Sword of Allāh.' He died in the year 21H.

Mu'ādh bin Jabak bin 'Amr bin Aws al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī, Abū 'Abdur-Rahmān, one of the foremost Companions known for his knowledge of legal rulings and the Qur'ān. He was present at the pledge of 'Uqbah and witnessed *Badr* and the following battles and was martyred due to a plague in the year 17H or 18H.

Mu'āwiyah: bin Abū Sufyān bin Ṣakhr bin Ḥarb bin Umayyah bin 'Abd Shams al-Qurashī al-Amawī. He accepted Islām in the year of the Conquest and witnessed *Hunain* and *al-Yamāmah*. He was one of the scribes who would write the revelation and died in the year 60H.

Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās: Sa'd bin Mālik bin Ahīb bin 'Abd Munāf al-Qurashī az-Zuhri Abū Ishaq bin Abī Waqqās. One of the ten who were promised Paradise and one whose supplications were answered. He was the last of the ten to pass away in the year 55H.

Salmān: al-Fārisī Abū 'Abdullāh, the servant of the Messenger (ﷺ). The first battle he witnessed was *al-Khandaq* and he was present at all following battles. He died in the year 36H.

Shaddād bin Aws: bin Thābit al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī, Abū Ya'lā. He was famous for his knowledge and wisdom and died in the year 58H.

Talhah: bin 'Ubaydullāh bin 'Uthmān bin 'Amr al-Qurashī, Abū

Muhammad, one of the ten promised Paradise. He witnessed *Ubud* and the following battles. He died in the year 36H.

'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb: Abū Ḥafs 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb bin Nufayl al-Qurashī al-'Adawī, the second Rightly Guided *Khalīfah* and one of the ten promised Paradise. He accepted Islām five years before the *Hijrah* and his acceptance was a great victory for the Muslims. He witnessed every battle that the Prophet (ﷺ) witnessed. He was martyred in the year 23H.

'Uthmān bin 'Affān: Dhū an-Nurayn 'Uthmān bin 'Affān bin Abū al-Ās bin Umayyah al-Qurashī al-Amawī, the third Rightly Guided *Khalīfah* and one of the ten promised Paradise. He was known for his generosity and freely giving in the Way of Allāh. He was married to two daughters of the Prophet (ﷺ), Ruqayyah and after her death, Umm Kulthūm. He was martyred in the year 35H.

The Successors

Al-Anṣārī: 'Abdur-Rahmān bin 'Amr bin Muḥammad, Abū 'Amr, one of the great scholars of his time. He was well versed in ḥadīth, *fiqh* and the military expeditions undertaken by the Prophet (ﷺ). The Muslims have agreed as to his excellence and being an *Imām*. His *fiqh* dominated Spain for a time and he died in the year 158H.

Ad-Dahbāk: bin Muzāhim al-Hilālī, Abū al-Qāsim al-Khurasānī, the *Imām* of *tafsīr*. He was trustworthy and precise and a student of Sa'īd bin Jubair. He died in the year 105H.

Fudayl bin 'Iyāq: bin Mas'ūd at-Tamīmī, Abū 'Alī, the *shaykh* of Mecca

and one of the righteous worshippers. He was trustworthy and precise, noble, having *wara'* and narrated many *ahādīth*. He died in the year 187H.

Al-Hasan al-Baṣrī: Al-Hasan bin Abū al-Hasan al-Anṣārī. He was trustworthy and precise, noble and famous. He was a great scholar and narrated many *ahādīth*. He died in the year 110H close to the age of ninety.

Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab: bin Ḥazn, Abū Muḥammad. He excelled in ḥadīth and *fiqh*, and was known for his worship and asceticism. He was one of the 'Seven Legal Jurists' of Madīnah and Imām Aḥmad regarded him to be the most virtuous of the Successors. He was trustworthy and precise and narrated many *ahādīth*. He died in the year 94H.

Ash-Sha'bī: 'Āmir bin Sharāḥil ash-Sha'bī al-Ḥumayrī, Abu 'Amr, the *Hāfiẓ*, Legal Jurist and poet. He died in the year 103H.

Sufyān ath-Thawrī: bin Sa'īd bin Masrūq, Abū 'Abdullāh ath-Thawree, one of the great *Imāms* and worshippers of this nation. He was titled 'The Leader of Believers in ḥadīth' and was well versed in *tafsīr*. He was the teacher of Abū Ḥanīfah and Mālik amongst others and died in the year 161H.

Urwab: bin az-Zubair bin al-'Awām al-Asadī, Abū 'Abdullāh. He was trustworthy and precise, a Legal Jurist, a scholar, and he narrated many *ahādīth*. He died in the year 94H.

Az-Zubrī: Muhammad bin Muslim bin 'Ubaydullāh al-Qurasahī, Abū Bakr, one of the *Imāms* of this nation. He was one of the most knowledgeable people of his time of ḥadīth and the Qur'ān. He was trustworthy and precise and narrated many *ahādīth*. He died in the year 124H.

Others

Abū al-‘Abbās bin ‘Aṭā’: Ahmad bīn Muḥammad bīn Sahl bīn ‘Aṭā’ al-Admī, from the *shaykhs* of the *Sufis*. He died in the year 309H or 311H.

Abū Dāwūd: Sulaymān bīn al-Ash‘ath bīn Ishaq bīn Bashir, Abū Dāwūd as-Sijistānī, the *Imām*, *Hāfiẓ* and author of the famous *Sunan*. He died in the year 275H.

Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī: Muḥammad bīn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī at-Tūsī, Abū Hāmid, he excelled in many sciences and authored a number of works such as *Iḥyā Ulum ad-Dīn* and *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*. He was known for his worship and asceticism and died in the year 505H.

Abumad: bīn Muḥammad bīn Hanbal bīn Hilāl ash-Shaybānī, Abū ‘Abdullāh, the *Imām* of the *Sunnah* and author of the famous *Musnad*. He was known for his knowledge of ḥadīth, *fiqh*, and his *taqwā* and asceticism. He died in the year 241H.

Bukhārī: Muḥammad bīn Ismā‘il bīn Ibrāhīm bīn al-Mughīrah, Abū ‘Abdullāh. He was born in the year 194H and became one of the *Imāms* of ḥadīth and was nicknamed ‘The Leader of the Believers in ḥadīth.’ He died in the year 256H.

Ibn Hibbān: Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad bīn Ḥibbān al-Tamīmī al-Bustī, the *Hāfiẓ*, *Mujtahid* and author of the famous *Saḥīḥ ibn Hibbān*. He died in the year 354H.

Ibn al-Jawzī: ‘Abdur-Rahmān bīn ‘Alī bīn Muḥammad, Abū al-Faraj al-Qurashī at-Tamīmī, the *Hāfiẓ* and *Imām*. He was a prolific writer and authored around three hundred works. He died in

the year 587H.

Muslim: bin al-Hajjāj bin Muslim al-Qushayrī, Abū al-Husain an-Naisābūrī, the *Hāfiẓ* and one of the great *Imāms* of this nation. He is the author of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* which is the most authentic book of ḥadīth after Bukhārī. He died in the year 261H.

Najdah al-Hurūrī: bin ‘Āmir al-Hanafī. He was one of the *Khawārij* who was unique, even amongst them, because he thought that it was obligatory to kill anyone who held an opposing view to him. He was killed in the year 69H.

Sahl bin ‘Abdullāh: bin Yunūs Abū Muḥammad at-Tustorī, one of the *Sūfis* scholars. He died in the year 283H.

Asb-Shāfi’ī: Muḥammad bin Idrees bin al-‘Abbās bin Shāfi’ī al-Hāshimī al-Qurashī, Abū ‘Abdullāh, the *Mujaddid* of his era and one of the great *Imāms* of this nation. He died in the year 204H.

Shayṭān: Also called *Iblīs*. He is a Jinn and the enemy of mankind, devoted to leading them astray in any way that he can. The word *Shayṭān* is derived from the verb *shayṭana* which means to be distant, and indeed *Shayṭān* is distant from all good.

At-Tirmidhī: Muḥammad bin ‘Isā bin Sawrah bin Mūsā bin ad-Daḥḥāk as-Sulamī at-Tirmidhī, the *Imām*, *Hāfiẓ* and the author of the famous *Sunan*. He was trustworthy and precise and one of the students of Bukhārī. He died in the year 279H.

Glossary of Arabic Terms

Ayāh: pl. *ayāt*. Sign, miracle, example, lesson, verse.

'Abd: pl. *'ebād*. slave, servant, worshipper.

Abrār: righteous.

Adhān: the call to prayer

Awliyā': plural of *walī*; friend, ally, loyal companion. From the word *wilāyah* meaning loyalty and closeness, the opposite of enmity.

Ayy: withholding the tongue from speaking, carefully considering each word before it is said.

Barzakh: barrier, isthmus. A barrier that is erected between the deceased and this life preventing him from returning and a generic reference to the life that commences after death.

Bayān: Speech, clarification, discourse. It is of two types: the first whereby the intended meaning is expressed clearly, whatever language it may be in, this category is not regarded as magic; the second whereby the intended meaning is expressed in eloquent, cleverly doctored phrases based upon specific rules such that one listening takes pleasure in hearing the words and they affect his very heart. This category is what has been likened to magic as it captivates and beguiles the heart and overcomes the soul to the point that the face of reality could be transformed to illusion and the one captivated perceive only that which the speaker wants him to perceive. This category can be used in a commendable fashion and in a blameworthy fashion. As for the commendable form, it is to direct the person towards the truth

and use these methods to aid the truth. As for the blameworthy form, it is to direct the person towards falsehood or envelop him in confusion such that the truth is seen as falsehood and falsehood as truth. This is completely blameworthy and has been likened to that which is completely blameworthy - magic.

Bid'ah: innovation, that which is newly introduced into the religion of Allāh.

Da'if: weak; the ḥadīth that is neither *sahīh* nor *ḥasan* because it fails to meet one of their requirements. It is of varying degrees of severity, the most severe of which being *mawdū'*, fabricated.

Dhawq: taste, perceptivity, technically referring to spiritual experience, *dhawq* is a more temporary state of *wajd*. One may receive some forms of inspiration in the heart as a result of these states however this inspiration should always be compared to the Book and Sunnah to ascertain its correctness.

Dikr: remembrance, recollection, technically referring the remembrance of Allāh.

Du'ā: supplication, invocation, it is an action of worship that may only be directed to Allāh. It is of two types, supplication through worship (*du'ā 'ibādah*) and supplication of request (*du'ā mas'alah*). The first type of *du'ā* can be understood when one understands that every act of worship is done with the unstated plea that Allāh accept that action of worship and the desire to draw closer to him; and hence attain His pleasure. Hence every action of worship is a type of request to Allāh. The second type of *du'ā* is whereby one explicitly asks his Lord of something such as 'O Allāh! Grant me good in this world and the Hereafter.' The second type includes the first type and the first type necessitates the second type.

Fard: see *wājib*.

Fasād: corruption, decay, and invalidity.

Fatwā; *fiqh*: legal ruling.

Fiqh: understanding and comprehension. *fiqh*: of the rulings and legislation of Islām.

Fisq: pl. *fusūq*. Immorality, transgression, wickedness.

Fitnab: pl. *fitan*. Trial, tribulation, civil strife.

Fitrah: primordial nature, the harmony between man, creation and Creator.

Ghayb: the Unseen, those matters beyond our senses.

Ghubṭa: envy, referring to the permissible form of envy where the envier wishes to have the same blessings as the envied but without desiring to see them removed from the envied. This is opposed to *hasad*, the blameworthy form of envy where the envier wishes to see the blessings removed from the envied.

Hadīth: A text attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ) describing his actions, words, descriptions and tacit approvals. It consists of two portions, the body of the text (*matn*) and the *isnād*. Rarely the term is also used to refer to a text attributed to a Companion or a *Tabi'i*.

Hāfiẓ: pl. *huffāz*. Hadith Master, commonly referred to one who has memorised at least 100,000 hadīths.

Hasan: good, fair. A ḥadīth whose *isnād* is continuously linked of just, morally upright narrators but whose precision (*dabt*) falls short of the requirements of the *shāhīh* hadīth; containing no irregularity (*shādūb*) and no hidden defect (*'illah*). A ḥadīth can be *hasan* in and of itself, or contain a defect but still be ruled to be so due to supporting evidences.

Ihudūk: limits, boundaries. The limits ordained by Allāh, prescribed punishments.

Hulūl wa-l-Ittihād: incarnation and unification, the settling of a superior faculty upon a support.

Ihsān: beneficence, excellence. To worship Allāh as if one is seeing Him, and knowing that even though one sees Him not, He sees the servant.

Ilm: knowledge.

Imān: The firm belief, complete acknowledgement and acceptance of all that Allāh and His Messenger have commanded to have faith in, submitting to it both inwardly and outwardly. It is the

acceptance and belief of the heart that includes the actions of the heart and body, therefore it encompasses the establishment of the whole religion. This is why the Imāms and Salaf used to say, ‘Faith is the statement of the heart and tongue, action of the heart, tongue and limbs.’ Hence it comprises statement, action and belief, it increases through obedience and decreases through disobedience. It includes the beliefs of faith, its morals and manners and the actions demanded by it.

Khalaf: successors. A reference to those who followed a path other than the path of the Salaf.

Khalifah: pl. *khulafā'*. Successor, representative. The Successors of the Prophet (ﷺ), head of the Islāmic state. Also called *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* or Leader of the Believers.

Khushū': submissiveness, humility.

Kufr: denial, rejection, hiding, technically referring to disbelief. It can be major (removing a person from the fold of Islām) or minor (not removing a person from the fold of Islām).

Qadr: Divine Decree and Destiny.

Qur'ān: The actual Word of Allāh revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) in the Arabic language through the medium of the Angel Gabriel and the greatest miracle bestowed him. It consists of 114 chapters commencing with al-Fātihah and ending with an-Nās.

Rabbat: dread.

RadiyAllāhu 'anbu/'anbā/'anbum/'anbumā: may Allāh be pleased with him/her/both of them.

RahimahAllāh/RahimahumAllāb: may Allāh bestow his mercy upon him/them.

Ramadān: ninth month of the Islāmic calendar.

Ridā: contentment and pleasure.

Riyyā': showing off, ostentation, an example of which lies in person beautifying actions of worship because he knows people are watching.

Ruqyā: recitation used to cure an illness or disease. It can only be

done in the Arabic tongue, in words whose meaning is understood, using verses of the Qur'ān or supplications of the Prophet combined with the belief that it is only Allāh who in reality gives the cure.

Sabr: patience and steadfastness, the restraint of ones self to that which is dictated by the divine law. It is of three levels, steadfastness in the obedience of Allāh, steadfastness in avoiding the prohibited matters and patience at the onset of calamity. *Ikhlas* can never be complete without *sidq* and *sidq* can never be complete without *ikhlas* and the two can never be complete without *daibr*. The person is patient through Allāh, i.e. seeking His aid Alone; for Allāh, i.e. arising out of love for Him and the desire to draw close to Him; and with Allāh, i.e. doing only that which He wills.

Sahābah: The Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), those who saw him, believed in him and died upon that belief.

Şahīb: correct, authentic. A ḥadīth which has a continuously linked *isnād*, of just, morally upright and precise narrators; containing no irregularity (*shādhab*) or hidden defect (*'illab*). Hence five conditions have to be met: the *isnād* being continuously linked; the justice (*'adl*) of the narrator; the precision (*dab'i*) of the narrator; its not being *shādhab*; and its not containing an '*illab*'. The ḥadīth can be ḥāfiḥ in and of itself, or it can contain a defect but still be ruled to be *şahīh* due to supporting evidences.

Salaf: predecessors. Technically used to refer to the best generations of Muslims, the first three generation: the *Sahābah*, the *Tābi'ūn* and the *Tab' Tābi'ūn*.

Shirk: association, technically referring to directing a right that is due to Allāh Alone to another object of creation, either completely or partially. It can be major (removing a person from the fold of Islām) or minor (not removing a person from the fold of Islām).

Sunan: a compilation of *abādīth*.

Sunnah: habit, customary practice, norm and usage as sanctioned by tradition. *fiqh*: the sayings, commands, prohibitions, actions, and tacit approvals of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Sūrah: chapter of the Qur'ān.

Surah: image, form, face.

Tābi'ūn: The generation following that of the Companions.

Taqwā: the basic meaning of which is setting a barrier between two things. This is why it is said that one *ittaqā* with his shield, i.e. he set it as a barrier between him and the one who wished him evil. Therefore it is as if the one who has *taqwa* (*muttaqi*) has used his following the commands of Allāh and avoiding His prohibitions as a barrier between himself and the Punishment. Hence he has preserved and fortified himself against the punishment of Allāh through his obeying Him.

Tawhīd: unification, monotheism, the belief in the absolute Oneness of Allāh. It is to believe that Allāh Alone is the creator, nourisher, and sustainer of the worlds; it is to believe that Allāh Alone deserves to be worshipped; and it is to believe that He has unique and perfect Names and Attributes that far transcend anything that one can imagine.

Ummah: nation, the Muslim nation.

Wudū': *fiqh*: ritual ablution.

Zakāh: *fiqh*: one of the pillars of Islām, an obligatory tax levied on a Muslim wealth subject to certain criteria.